

Chris Dragos
TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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I. SUMMARY OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses Taught (8 preparations; 20 sections):

- 2020-21. *Ryerson University, Philosophy Department* (Toronto, Canada).
PHL214 **Critical Thinking** (75 students)
- 2019-20;
2020-21. *Ryerson University, Philosophy Department* (Toronto, Canada).
PHL110 **Philosophy of Religion** (6 sections; 430 students)
- 2019-20;
2020-21. *Ryerson University, Philosophy Department* (Toronto, Canada).
PHL709 **Science, Religion, and Philosophy** (2 sections; 190 students).
- 2018-19;
2020-21. *Ryerson University, Philosophy Department* (Toronto, Canada).
PHL708 **Introduction to Modern Philosophy** (3 sections; 220 students).
- 2019-20. *Ryerson University, Philosophy Department* (Toronto, Canada).
PHL508 **The Empiricists.** (30 students)
- summer 2019. *University of Toronto, Philosophy Department* (Mississauga, Canada).
PHL245 **Critical Reasoning** (120 students).
- 2018-19. *Ryerson University, Arts & Contemporary Studies* (Toronto, Canada).
ACS103 **Introduction to Humanities** (3 sections; 165 students).
- 2016-17. *University of Toronto, Philosophy Department* (Mississauga, Canada).
PHL235 **Philosophy of Religion** (60 students).
- 2016-17. *University of Toronto, IHPST* (Toronto, Canada)
HPS350 **Topics in Philosophy of Science:
Social Epistemology of Science** (30 students).
- summer 2016. *University of Toronto, Philosophy Department* (Toronto, Canada)
PHL275 **Introduction to Ethics** (115 students).

Areas Prepared to Teach:

Epistemology; Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of Religion; General Humanities; General History of Science; Modern Philosophy; Critical Thinking; Philosophy of Mind; Metaphysics; Symbolic Logic.

II. TEACHING STATEMENT

When I teach, I try to get students to recognize the relevance of historical and philosophical ideas for both everyday life and big-picture issues. Getting students engaged makes it easier to foster their critical thinking, reading, writing, and conversing skills.

Lectures

I have developed a lecturing method that is informed by empirical work in cognitive and social psychology. I learned that lecturing is conversational, even though one party contributes most verbal communication. Many related non-verbal and para-verbal types of expression factor into communication (e.g. Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey 2006; Hargie 2011). Other fields have long recognized this (e.g. broadcasting, law, politics), but it is just as relevant for teaching philosophy. I continually train myself away from certain habits of body language and tone (see Krauss *et.al.* 1996; Kinsley Gorman 2011). For example, I used to interlock my fingers while lecturing, relying mostly on bare verbal communication. But this can signal detachment. To instead signal engagement and genuineness, I trained myself to habitually employ conversational hand gestures and to move about the room. At the same time, I closely monitor students' non-verbal communications. I do this by approaching and speaking directly with individual students as I lecture, as opposed to lecturing at the class as an amorphous body. This affords me a live view of how things are going. I can then implement appropriate changes: slow down, repeat, call a break, quit playing devil's advocate, etc. I also apply what I learned about proxemics (e.g. Hall 1966), which is in part concerned with the psychological importance of relative physical space between parties. For example, when I address a student, I stop pacing the room and take a step in their direction.

Slides

Students strongly prefer having lecture slides (Susskind 2005; Nouri 2005; Apperson *et. al.* 2006; Drouin *et. al.* 2013). Yet, slides positively affect learning outcomes only under certain conditions (Abdelrahmana *et. al.* 2013). For example, there is no measurable learning effect when slides are numerous or contain lots of content (Brock *et al.* 2011). Graphics and audio that are not directly relevant negatively affect student performance on recall and recognition tasks (Bartscha & Cobern 2003). So, I employ the assertion-evidence (AE) approach (Marshall 2012). On the standard model, slides contain a topical title followed by bulleted points. But on the AE approach, slides are instead organized around central claims, elaborated by limited text and relevant pictorial and graphic content. I also coordinate the precise text and graphic animation timing of my slides with the precise wording and timing of my lectures. All this makes preparing for and rehearsing lectures a good deal of work. Yet, the result is a psychologically and intellectually cohesive learning experience.

The accelerated move toward online learning makes a conscientious approach to slides necessary. I have significant experience teaching online, starting well before covid-19. I have taught on a number of different platforms, to large and small groups of students, and on diverse content. All my 2020-21 teaching is online. Thus far, it has gone very smoothly.

Readings

While developing a lecturing method, I was struck by this data point: since the 1970s, fewer than one in three students complete assigned readings (Burchfield & Sappington 2000; Hobson 2004). This motivated me to consult quality secondary literature when preparing lectures, relying less on my interpretations of material outside my areas of specialization. My lectures are now comprehensive, organized, and coherent amalgamations of the core themes stressed by many specialists. Ideally, lectures are not students' sole means of

interacting with the literature. But for most they are. Partly for this reason, I now assign more primary source readings in my courses. This decision was also informed by corroborating data I collect in my courses. Late in each course, I ask students to complete an online survey. To date I have found that forty percent of my students typically completed assigned readings, which is notably higher than the industry figure. Ninety-one percent of these students also typically attend lectures. Only a few students typically complete readings but do not typically attend lectures. But even these students typically review lecture content made available online. This means every student who typically completes assigned readings also typically attends or interacts with lectures. Thus, assigning primary source readings maximizes the learning experiences of the portion of students who complete assigned readings: they first read primary sources, then interact with secondary sources through lecture. The remaining, larger portion of students who do not complete assigned readings at least interact with quality secondary sources through the lecture. The learning experiences of all students are maximized by this approach.

Assignments

Approaching lectures, slides, and readings in the above ways affords me the best chance of getting students to recognize the relevance of ideas they encounter in the classroom. Honing critical skills is attained by *doing* philosophy, history, etc., not just passively receiving content. But this can be hard, especially for new students. This is why I employ the following strategies for lower-year courses. I start each with a critical reasoning primer. I might give four or five simple pop quizzes throughout the term, each covering the central ideas discussed since the last quiz. This encourages regular attendance and ongoing review. I use a scaffolding model for assignments. Skills necessary for writing a term paper are sharpened separately through a series of short assignments and tests. For example, I might assign a précis early in the term, requiring students to extract and simplify the core ideas of a reading within a strict word limit. This fosters concision, accuracy, and the ability to set aside auxiliary ideas. I also provide students with substantive feedback on assignments. Tests and midterms are mainly expository: definitions, short answer explanations, and applying course content to hypothetical scenarios. Yet, with the term paper looming, here I might also push students half a step toward generating their own analyses. I might require them to offer a counterexample or to construct and analyse a scenario of their own making. For example, I asked students in an introductory ethics course for either a counterexample to the principle of utility or a scenario in which the morally right action, according to classic utilitarianism, has negative utility. These questions do not call for original, structured argumentation. But they whet the skills necessary for constructing an argument in a term paper. Well ahead of the term paper deadline, I offer an essay writing primer and extended office hours. I also provide a set of writing guidelines, tips, and samples.

My pedagogy is empirically informed and a fair bit pragmatic. I consider several psychological factors involved in learning so that I can get students to recognize the relevance of the ideas they encounter in the classroom. This gets students engaged so I can foster their critical thinking, reading, writing, and conversing skills. Given that most of my students will not continue to an academic career, I am explicit, especially in lower-year courses, about the relevance of critical thinking skills beyond academic applications. At Redeemer, I would focus this carefully developed teaching methodology on guiding students to become “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16).

(See final page of portfolio for bibliography.)

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

The Empiricists (2019-20)—Ryerson University

**Scale: 1—Disagree 2—Somewhat Disagree
3—Neither Agree nor Disagree 4—Somewhat Agree 5—Agree**

<i>4 online surveys completed</i>	The Empiricists	Department Average (Not Available)	Division Average (Not Available)
Standard Questions:			
The instructor is knowledgeable about the course material.	5.0	—	—
The course material was presented with enthusiasm.	5.0	—	—
The instructor stimulates my interest in this subject.	5.0	—	—
Concepts are clearly explained with appropriate use of examples.	5.0	—	—
I get timely feedback on my assignments.	5.0	—	—
I get constructive feedback on my assignments.	5.0	—	—
The course handouts/postings contain all of the information I need about the organization and operation of this course.	5.0	—	—
The assessment methods, including tests, provide a fair evaluation of my learning.	5.0	—	—
Students are treated with fairness and respect.	5.0	—	—
The class meets as scheduled and on time.	4.75	—	—
The course is well organized and managed.	5.0	—	—
The instructor is available for consultation as specified on the course handouts/postings.	5.0	—	—
This course provides a valuable learning experience.	5.0	—	—
The way this course is taught helps me to learn.	5.0	—	—
Mean Evaluation:	4.98	—	—

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Science, Religion, & Philosophy (2019-20)—Ryerson University

**Scale: 1—Disagree 2—Somewhat Disagree
3—Neither Agree nor Disagree 4—Somewhat Agree 5—Agree**

21 online surveys completed

Science,
Religion, &
Philosophy

Department
Average
(Not Available)

Division
Average
(Not Available)

Standard Questions:

The instructor is knowledgeable about the course material.	5.0	—	—
The course material was presented with enthusiasm.	4.81	—	—
The instructor stimulates my interest in this subject.	4.95	—	—
Concepts are clearly explained with appropriate use of examples.	4.81	—	—
I get timely feedback on my assignments.	5.0	—	—
I get constructive feedback on my assignments.	4.9	—	—
The course handouts/postings contain all of the information I need about the organization and operation of this course.	5.0	—	—
The assessment methods, including tests, provide a fair evaluation of my learning.	4.9	—	—
Students are treated with fairness and respect.	5.0	—	—
The class meets as scheduled and on time.	4.95	—	—
The course is well organized and managed.	5.0	—	—
The instructor is available for consultation as specified on the course handouts/postings.	5.0	—	—
This course provides a valuable learning experience.	4.9	—	—
The way this course is taught helps me to learn.	4.86	—	—

Mean Evaluation:

4.93

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III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Philosophy of Religion (2019-20)—Ryerson University

**Scale: 1—Disagree 2—Somewhat Disagree
3—Neither Agree nor Disagree 4—Somewhat Agree 5—Agree**

49 online surveys completed

	Philosophy of Religion	Department Average (Not Available)	Division Average (Not Available)
Standard Questions:			
The instructor is knowledgeable about the course material.	5.0	—	—
The course material was presented with enthusiasm.	4.71	—	—
The instructor stimulates my interest in this subject.	4.65	—	—
Concepts are clearly explained with appropriate use of examples.	4.76	—	—
I get timely feedback on my assignments.	4.68	—	—
I get constructive feedback on my assignments.	4.57	—	—
The course handouts/postings contain all of the information I need about the organization and operation of this course.	4.88	—	—
The assessment methods, including tests, provide a fair evaluation of my learning.	4.82	—	—
Students are treated with fairness and respect.	4.98	—	—
The class meets as scheduled and on time.	4.86	—	—
The course is well organized and managed.	4.8	—	—
The instructor is available for consultation as specified on the course handouts/postings.	4.98	—	—
This course provides a valuable learning experience.	4.84	—	—
The way this course is taught helps me to learn.	4.69	—	—
Mean Evaluation:	4.8	—	—

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Critical Reasoning (Summer 2019)—University of Toronto

Scale: 1—Not At All 2—Somewhat 3—Moderately 4—Mostly 5—A Great Deal

32 online surveys completed	Critical Reasoning	Department Average	Division Average
Core Institutional Items:			
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.0	4.3	3.9
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.1	4.3	4.1
The instructor created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.4	4.5	4.2
Course projects, assignments, tests, and exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.0	4.1	3.9
Course projects, assignments, tests and exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.2	4.2	3.9
Core Institutional Mean:	4.1	4.3	4.0
Divisional Items:			
Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was:(1-Very Light; 3-Average; 5-Very Heavy)	2.8	3.1	3.4
I would recommend this course to other students.	4.0	4.1	3.6
The course inspired me to learn more about the subject matter.	3.7	4.0	3.6
Departmental Items:			
The course instructor expressed an interest in student understanding when explaining course concepts.	4.4	4.5	—
The course instructor was enthusiastic about the course material.	4.3	4.4	—
The course provided instruction on how to critically evaluate ideas.	4.6	4.5	—
Instructor-Selected Items:			
The course stimulated new ways for me to think about the world.	4.4	—	—
The course instructor organized lectures in a logical manner.	4.7	—	—
The course instructor responded respectfully to students' questions.	4.9	—	—

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Introduction to Modern Philosophy (2018-19)—Ryerson University

**Scale: 1—Disagree 2—Somewhat Disagree
3—Neither Agree nor Disagree 4—Somewhat Agree 5—Agree**

19 online surveys completed

Intro. to
Modern
Philosophy

Department
Average
(Not Available)

Division
Average
(Not Available)

Standard Questions:

The instructor is knowledgeable about the course material.	4.95	—	—
The course material was presented with enthusiasm.	4.8	—	—
The instructor stimulates my interest in this subject.	4.6	—	—
Concepts are clearly explained with appropriate use of examples.	4.6	—	—
I get timely feedback on my assignments.	4.85	—	—
I get constructive feedback on my assignments.	4.85	—	—
The course handouts/postings contain all of the information I need about the organization and operation of this course.	4.85	—	—
The assessment methods, including tests, provide a fair evaluation of my learning.	4.8	—	—
Students are treated with fairness and respect.	4.9	—	—
The class meets as scheduled and on time.	4.65	—	—
The course is well organized and managed.	4.4	—	—
The instructor is available for consultation as specified on the course handouts/postings.	4.75	—	—
This course provides a valuable learning experience.	4.7	—	—
The way this course is taught helps me to learn.	4.35	—	—

Mean Evaluation:

4.7

—

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III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Introduction to the Humanities (2018-19)—Ryerson University

**Scale: 1—Disagree 2—Somewhat Disagree
3—Neither Agree nor Disagree 4—Somewhat Agree 5—Agree**

19 online surveys completed

	Intro. to Humanities	Department Average (Not Available)	Division Average (Not Available)
Standard Questions:			
The instructor is knowledgeable about the course material.	4.7	—	—
The course material was presented with enthusiasm.	4.0	—	—
The instructor stimulates my interest in this subject.	4.0	—	—
Concepts are clearly explained with appropriate use of examples.	4.2	—	—
I get timely feedback on my assignments.	4.6	—	—
I get constructive feedback on my assignments.	4.7	—	—
The course handouts/postings contain all of the information I need about the organization and operation of this course.	4.5	—	—
The assessment methods, including tests, provide a fair evaluation of my learning.	4.5	—	—
Students are treated with fairness and respect.	4.9	—	—
The class meets as scheduled and on time.	4.6	—	—
The course is well organized and managed.	4.6	—	—
The instructor is available for consultation as specified on the course handouts/postings.	4.9	—	—
This course provides a valuable learning experience.	4.7	—	—
The way this course is taught helps me to learn.	4.4	—	—
Optional Questions:			
The instructor uses technology in ways that helped my learning of concepts and principles.	4.3	—	—
Guest speakers contribute significantly to this course.	4.5	—	—
Mean Evaluation:	4.4	—	—

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Topics in Philosophy of Science (2016-17)—University of Toronto

Scale: 1—Not At All 2—Somewhat 3—Moderately 4—Mostly 5—A Great Deal

<i>10 online surveys completed</i>	Philosophy of Science	Department Average	Division Average
Core Institutional Items:			
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.7	4.0	3.9
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.5	4.1	4.1
The instructor created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.6	4.2	4.0
Course projects, assignments, tests, and exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.2	3.8	3.8
Course projects, assignments, tests and exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.5	3.9	3.8
Core Institutional Mean:	4.5	4.0	3.9
Divisional Items:			
Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was:(1-Very Light; 3-Average; 5-Very Heavy)	3.0	2.8	3.3
I would recommend this course to other students.	4.0	4.0	3.7
The instructor generated enthusiasm for learning in the course.	4.7	4.3	4.1
Departmental Items:			
The course instructor made it clear what students were expected to learn in the course.	4.1	4.2	—
Course projects and/or assignments provided opportunity for creativity and creative thinking.	4.2	3.8	—
Instructor-Selected Items:			
The course stimulated new ways for me to think about the world.	4.6	—	—
The course instructor's feedback on course assignments, projects, tests, and/or papers provided guidance on how to improve my performance in the course.	4.7	—	—
The course instructor responded respectfully to students' questions.	5.0	—	—

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Philosophy of Religion (2016-17)—University of Toronto

Scale: 1—Not At All 2—Somewhat 3—Moderately 4—Mostly 5—A Great Deal

24 online surveys completed	Philosophy of Religion	Department Average	Division Average
Core Institutional Items:			
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.4	3.7	3.8
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.4	3.8	4.0
The instructor created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.5	3.7	4.0
Course projects, assignments, tests, and exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.4	3.8	3.8
Course projects, assignments, tests and exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.6	3.8	3.8
Core Institutional Mean:	4.5	3.8	3.9
Divisional Items:			
Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was:(1-Very Light; 3-Average; 5-Very Heavy)	3.0	3.0	3.2
I would recommend this course to other students.	4.3	3.4	3.6
The course inspired me to learn more about the subject matter.	4.0	3.3	3.6
Departmental Items:			
The course instructor expressed an interest in student understanding when explaining course concepts.	4.5	4.0	—
The course instructor was enthusiastic about the course material.	4.6	4.2	—
The course provided instruction on how to critically evaluate ideas.	4.4	3.7	—
Instructor-Selected Items:			
The course stimulated new ways for me to think about the world.	4.4	—	—
The course instructor organized lectures in a logical manner.	4.7	—	—
The course instructor responded respectfully to students' questions.	4.9	—	—

III. STUDENT EVALUATIONS Introduction to Ethics (Summer 2016)

Scale: 1—Not At All 2—Somewhat 3—Moderately 4—Mostly 5—A Great Deal

41 online surveys completed	Introduction to Ethics	Department Average	Division Average
Core Institutional Items:			
I found the course intellectually stimulating.	4.1	4.1	4.0
The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.1	4.1	4.1
The instructor created an atmosphere that was conducive to my learning.	4.2	4.3	4.1
Course projects, assignments, tests, and exams improved my understanding of the course material.	4.2	4.1	3.9
Course projects, assignments, tests and exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.	4.4	4.1	3.9
Core Institutional Mean:	4.2	4.1	4.0
Divisional Items:			
Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was:(1-Very Light; 3-Average; 5-Very Heavy)	2.8	3.2	3.4
I would recommend this course to other students.	4.1	3.8	3.9
The instructor generated enthusiasm for learning in the course.	4.1	4.0	4.1
Departmental Items:			
The course inspired me to learn more about the subject matter.	4.0	3.8	—
The course instructor was enthusiastic about the course material.	4.2	4.3	—
The instructor explained concepts clearly.	4.4	4.2	—
Overall, the quality of instruction in this course was:	4.1	4.0	—
Instructor-Selected Items:			
During the course, the course instructor was approachable when students sought guidance.	4.5	—	—
The course instructor organized lectures in a logical manner.	4.5	—	—
The course instructor used technology resources effectively.	4.4	—	—

IV. FULL COURSE SYLLABUS

Philosophy Department
Ryerson University, Winter 2019

PHL 708 Introduction to Modern Philosophy

Time: Monday 1:00pm–3:00pm; Wednesday 1:00pm–2:00pm

Location: Monday KHE 129; Wednesday EPH 216

Instructor: Chris Dragos

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 12:00pm–1:00pm at POD 375

Course Webpage: on D2L (<https://courses.ryerson.ca/d2l/home>)

Email address for this course: **idragos@ryerson.ca**

Course Description:

In this course students will examine the foundations of contemporary conceptions of knowledge through a study of the two dominant philosophical traditions of the 17th and 18th centuries—Rationalism and Empiricism. The main philosophers studied will be Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant. The themes examined will include the nature of knowledge, the origin and formation of beliefs about the external world and of scientific theories and methods, the threat of skepticism, and the relation between mind and body.

Required Texts:

- (1) Reading package.
- (2) Additional readings on D2L.

Evaluation

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| (1) Précis..... | 15%..... | Due Feb. 9 (11:59pm) |
| (2) Short Response Paper..... | 25%..... | Due Mar. 15 (11:59pm) |
| (3) Term Paper..... | 35%..... | Due Apr. 15 (11:59pm) |
| (4) Quizzes..... | 20%..... | In Class (see schedule) |
| (5) Participation..... | 5% | |

A précis is a short expository essay. Students will have limited space to present the core idea(s) or argument(s) of an assigned text. A good précis will be accurate and concise. It will demonstrate one's ability to distinguish between the primary and auxiliary contents of a text. This assignment is strictly about accurately comprehending and presenting another's ideas. Thus, students are not to critically engage with the text.

In the response paper, students will identify and present an idea or argument from their choice of assigned text to-date. They will then offer a criticism of the idea or argument. An in-class Essay Writing Primer will be provided ahead of the term paper deadline.

5 quizzes are scheduled on Wednesdays throughout the term, written at the beginning of class. Quizzes will cover all the material since the last quiz. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Thus, each quiz is worth 5% of the final grade. Quizzes will contain definitions (a 2-3 sentence explanation of a term or idea) and short answer questions (a short paragraph in response to a question posed). There will be no long answer or essay questions on the quizzes. At least 48 hours before each quiz, I will post a set of Possible Quiz Questions to D2L. A subset of these will appear on the quiz.

Course Page: All announcements will be made through D2L. It is your responsibility to check the course page on a regular basis and keep up-to-date with the course. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are receiving emails sent out through D2L.

Email Policy: All emails for this course should be directed to idragos@ryerson.ca, and should be sent from your university email account. Emails will generally be answered within 48 hours. However, I may *not* answer emails if (1) the relevant information is available on the course webpage or syllabus, or if (2) the question is best addressed during class or office hours (e.g. a detailed philosophical question).

Extensions and Late Papers: Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, unless (a) prior arrangements have been made with me by email for an extension or (b) there is a medical or family emergency (in which case documentation may be required). Plan ahead: you may request extensions by email up until 48 hours before assignments are due; after that, extensions will be granted only for illness or family emergencies.

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. We will ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from Ryerson University is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, Ryerson University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Ryerson University's code of behaviour on academic matters is available at (<https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/students/penalties-and-consequences/>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see <https://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>).

Copyright in Instructional Settings: If a student wishes to record or reproduce lecture presentations, course notes, or other materials provided by the instructor, the student must obtain the instructor's consent beforehand. Otherwise reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

Schedule of Topics & Readings:

Jan. 14, 16: Overview, Housekeeping, & Critical Reasoning Primer

Mon. Jan. 21: Aristotelian-Medieval Natural Philosophy
Reading: Aristotle, *Physics*, bk.1 pt.1, bk.2 pts.1-3.

Wed. Jan. 23: Aristotelian-Medieval Epistemology & Metaphysics
Reading: DeWitt, *Aristotelian-Medieval Worldview*.

QUIZ#1

Mon. Jan. 28: Ancient Skepticism
Reading: Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Skepticism*, book 1 parts i-xiii.

Wed. Jan. 30: Descartes—Foundationalism
Reading: Descartes, *Meditations*, 1-4.

Mon. Feb. 4: Descartes—Natural Philosophy
Readings: Descartes, *The World*, "The Treatise on Light," chapters 1-2.
Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, excerpts of parts 2-4.

Wed. Feb. 6: Weather Cancellation.

[Sat. Feb. 9: Précis Due @11:59pm on D2L]

Mon. Feb. 11: Copernicus, Galileo, & Kepler
Reading: Galileo, *Siderius Nuncius*.

QUIZ#2

Wed. Feb. 13: Weather Cancellation.

Mon. Feb. 18: **NO CLASS (Family Day)**

Wed. Feb. 20: **NO CLASS (Study Week)**

Mon. Feb. 25: Locke—Ideas & Knowledge

Reading: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, book 1 chapters 1-2; book 2 chapters 1-7, 12-13.

Wed. Feb. 27: Locke—Primary & Secondary Qualities

Reading: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, book 2 chapter 8.

Mon. Mar. 4: Locke—Substance & Personal Identity.

Reading: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, book 2 chapter 27; book 4 chapter 3 section 6.

Wed. Mar. 6: Locke—Substance & Personal Identity (cont'd)

Reading: No Readings.

QUIZ#3

Mon. Mar. 11: Leibniz—Mechanism & Unity/Identity

Reading: Leibniz, *A New System*.

Wed. Mar. 13: Leibniz—Empiricism & Necessity

Reading: Leibniz, *New Essays On Human Understanding*, preface.

[Fri. Mar. 15: Response Paper Due @11:59pm on D2L]

Mon. Mar. 18: Hume—Impressions, Substance, Identity, Custom & Habit

Reading: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sections 1-4.

Wed. Mar. 20: Cancellation (Student Walk-Out)

Mon. Mar. 25: Hume—Problem of Induction

Reading: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, re-read section 4.

QUIZ#4

Wed. Mar. 27: Kant—Overview

Reading: Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, Intro; Preamble; Gen. Problems.

Mon. Apr. 1: Kant—Overview (cont'd)

Reading: Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, Main Transcendental Prob. 1-3.

Wed. Apr. 3: Kant—Sensibility & Understanding

Reading: Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, Conclusion.

Mon. Apr. 8: Kant—Categories of Understanding; Essay Writing Primer

Reading: No Readings.

QUIZ #5

Wed. Apr. 10: Writing Appointments (11:00am-3:00pm)

[Mon. Apr. 15: Term Paper Due @11:59pm on D2L]

IV. COURSE OUTLINE
Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto, St. George Campus, Summer 2016
PHL 275 Introduction to Ethics

Course Description:

What's morally right and what's morally wrong? Do I determine what's right and wrong for me? Does my culture? Is what's right and wrong independent of what I or my culture take them to be? Is it always wrong to kill? Is it justified in special circumstances? Is it wrong for me to spend money on luxuries when other people are starving and without shelter? Is there a right way for me to conduct my life?

This course is divided into three parts. In the first part, we will examine influential moral theories. *Utilitarianism* and *Kantianism* each attempts to provide a systematic account of the difference between right and wrong action. *Virtue Ethics* attempts to account for the difference between virtuous and vicious character. We will close this section by exploring a more recent approach, *Care Ethics*. In the second part, we will examine several skeptical challenges to morality. Are there objective answers to moral questions? Is morality relative to one's culture? Is it a matter of personal opinion? What is the relationship between morality and science? Last, we will explore two moral issues: global poverty and the morality of war.

Required Text:

Whatever Happened to Good and Evil, by Russ Shafer-Landau

Week 1: Introduction & Critical Reasoning Primer

Unit 1: Moral Theories

Week 2: Utilitarianism

Reading: Mill, "In Defense of Utilitarianism"

Week 3: Objections to Utilitarianism

Readings: Nozick, "The Experience Machine"; Smart, "Utilitarianism and Justice"; Rawls, "The Separateness of Persons"

Week 4: Kantianism

Reading: Shafer-Landau, "The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice"

Week 5: Kantianism (cont'd)

Reading: Shafer-Landau, "The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect"

Week 6: Virtue Ethics; Care Ethics

Readings: Rachels, "The Ethics of Virtue"; Noddings, "The Language of Care Ethics"; Tronto, "Care"

Unit 2: Moral Skepticism

Week 7: Moral Skepticism;

Reading: Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Ch.1-8 (pp.3-37);

Week 8: Moral Disagreement; Morality & Science

Readings: Prinz, "Morality is a Culturally Conditioned Response"; Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Ch.14 (pp.67-74)

Week 9: Morality & Science

Reading: Shafer-Landau, *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* Ch.17 (pp.91-101)

Unit 3: Moral Issues

Week 10: Just War

Readings: Walzer, "Just & Unjust Wars"; McMahan, "The Ethics of Killing in War"; Rodin, "Terrorism without Intention"

Week 11: Global Poverty & Moral Obligation

Readings: Singer, "Famine Affluence and Morality"; Arthur, "World Hunger and Moral Obligation: The Case Against Singer"

Week 12: Final Exam Review

IV. COURSE OUTLINE

Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto, Mississauga, Summer 2019
PHL 245 Critical Reasoning

Course Description:

This course is intended to foster the skills necessary for clear and critical reasoning and argumentation, as well as accurate and charitable interpretation of others' arguments. In Unit 1, we will lay the theoretical groundwork for the course. We will study the concept of knowledge. To this end, we will explore models of truth and of justification. We will also distinguish between skepticism, nihilism, objectivism, relativism, and subjectivism about truth and justification. In Unit 2, we will cover what makes an argument logically well-formed. We will also explore what features of arguments other than their logical form make them stronger or weaker—more or less convincing. In Unit 3, we will cover rules and guidelines for accurately interpreting and reconstructing arguments. We'll also explore the relationship between arguments and subarguments. In Unit 4, we will learn how to effectively evaluate arguments and to identify and avoid certain common fallacies of reasoning.

Required Texts:

Custom Print of Richard Feldman (2014). *Reason and Argument* (2 ed.). Pearson.

Schedule:

UNIT 1: Knowledge & Thinking Critically

Tues. July 2: Introduction; The Concept of Knowledge (ch. 1)

Thurs. July 4: Realism, Relativism, Nihilism, & Skepticism; Models of Truth
(ch. 2, pts. I-II)

Tues. July 9: Belief & Justification (ch. 2, pts. III-IV)

Thurs. July 11: TEST 1; Introduction to Unit 2

UNIT 2: Good vs. Bad Arguments

Tues. July 16: Well-Formed Arguments (ch. 3)

Thurs. July 18: Strong Arguments (ch. 4)

Tues. July 23: TEST 2; Introduction to Unit 3

UNIT 3: Reconstructing Arguments

Thurs. July 25: Interpretation/Reconstruction (ch. 5)

Tues. July 30: Arguments & Subarguments (ch. 6)

Thurs. Aug. 1: TEST 3; Introduction to Unit 4

UNIT 3: Evaluating Arguments

Tues. Aug. 6: Guidelines for Evaluating Arguments (ch. 7)

Thurs. Aug. 8: Fallacies of Reasoning (text provided by instructor)

[TEST 4 to be scheduled during exam period. Date and time TBA.]

IV. COURSE OUTLINE

Department of Philosophy
Ryerson University, Fall 2018
ACS 103 Introduction to the Humanities

Course Description:

In this course students learn to identify a humanistic perspective, and analyze how this perspective can infuse our understanding of the world around us. Students are also introduced to the various ways in which this perspective is applied in Arts and Contemporary Studies—in particular in the program's subject-based and interdisciplinary options—while gaining some of the academic skills relating to effective research, writing and expression that they will require to excel in a university setting.

Required Texts:

- (1) DeWitt (2010), *Worldviews 2nd Edition* (Wiley-Blackwell)
- (2) Supplementary readings on course page.

Week 1: Housekeeping, Overview, and Critical Thinking Boot Camp

Unit 1: Nature as Text (i.e. Historical Worldviews)

Week 2: The Ancient World (Aristotelian-Medieval Worldview)

Readings: DeWitt, *Worldviews*, chs. 9-12.

Week 3: The Modern Era (Cartesian & Newtonian Worldviews)

Readings: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditations 1-4;
DeWitt chs. 18-20, 22.

Week 4: Foundations of the Contemporary Scientific Worldview

Readings: DeWitt, chs. 24-25.

Unit 2: Culture, Country, & City (i.e. Society) as Text

Week 5: Science & Values

Readings: Gorham, ch.5; Chalmers, *What is this Thing Called Science*, Intro-ch.2.

Week 6: Global Suffering & Moral Obligation

Readings: Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality.”

Week 7: Political Repression in the 20th Century

Readings: Browning, *Ordinary Men* (excerpts);

Week 8: Humanities & Law in a Canadian Context: The Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms & the Supreme Court’s Decision on Insite

Readings: See course page links to Canadian Charter and Court’s Insite Decision.

Week 9: In-Class Essay (Part 1); Term Paper Boot Camp (Part 2)

Week 10: Global Studies: International Relations—On Geographical “Hot Spots.”

Readings: None.

Unit 3: Image & Film as Text

Week 11: Film—*The Death of Stalin*

Readings: Dostoevsky, *The Devils* (excerpts); Photograph portfolio.

Week 12: Film—*Citizen Kane*

Readings: None.

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