

Chris Dragos  
**TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

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## I. SUMMARY OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Instructor (6):

- Summer 2019. Philosophy Department, University of Toronto  
PHL245 **Critical Reasoning** (Enrollment: 120)
- 2018-19. Philosophy Department, Ryerson University  
PHL708 **Introduction to Modern Philosophy** (Enrollment: 70)  
Student Evaluation: 4.7/5.0.
- 2018-19. Philosophy Department, Ryerson University  
ACS103 **Introduction to the Humanities** (3 Sections; Enrollment: 165)  
Student Evaluation: 4.4/5.0
- 2016-17. IHPST, University of Toronto  
HPS350 **Topics in Philosophy of Science:  
Social Epistemology of Science** (Enrollment: 30)  
Student Evaluation: 4.5/5.0
- 2016-17. Philosophy Department, University of Toronto  
PHL235 **Philosophy of Religion** (Enrollment: 60)  
Student Evaluation: 4.5/5.0
- Summer 2016. Philosophy Department, University of Toronto  
PHL275 **Introduction to Ethics** (Enrollment: 115)  
Student Evaluation: 4.2/5.0

### Assistant (14):

- 2018-19. **Introduction to Philosophy: Persons & Value**
- 2018-19. **Introduction to Philosophy: Reason & Truth**
- 2018-19; 2017-18;  
2016-17; 2015-16 (5) **Introduction to the History & Philosophy of Science** (online)
- 2015-16. **Introduction to Ethics** (Head Teaching Assistant for 6 TAs)
- 2015-16; 2014-15. **Science, Paradoxes, & Knowledge**
- Summer 2015 **History of Evolutionary Biology I**
- 2010-11. **Introduction to Philosophy**
- 2011-12. **Introduction to Epistemology**
- 2010-11. **Science, Philosophy, & Religion**

### Areas Prepared to Teach:

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

## II. TEACHING STATEMENT

When I teach philosophy, I try to get students to recognize the relevance of 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 move toward online learning makes a conscientious approach to slides necessary. Four of my eleven TA-ships have been for an online Introduction to the History & Philosophy of Science. Enrollment has ranged from 650 to 1000 students. I have run twenty online tutorials, each with thirty students. (Douglas Campbell, in his letter of support at Tab V, offers some comments on my lecture slides.)

### 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 several specialists. Ideally, lectures are not students' sole means of interacting with the literature. But for most they are. For this and other reasons, I have assigned mostly primary source readings since my second course. (See my course outlines at Tab IV.) This decision was informed by data I collected in my first course. It was corroborated by data from my second and third courses. Late in each course, I asked students to complete an online survey I constructed. I learned that forty percent of students (55/138 respondents) typically completed assigned readings. Ninety-one percent of these (50/55) also typically attended lectures. Only one student typically completed readings but did not typically attend lectures. But this student typically reviewed lecture content made available online. This means every surveyed student who typically completed assigned readings also typically attended or interacted with lectures. Thus, assigning primary source readings maximized the learning experiences of the portion of students who completed assigned readings: they first read primary sources, then interacted with secondary sources through lecture. The remaining, larger portion of students who did not complete assigned readings interacted with quality secondary sources through the lecture. Their learning experiences were maximized through a concise yet comprehensive overview. (See Lu-Vada Dunford's letter of support at Tab V for comments on the student surveys I developed.)

### Assignments

Approaching lectures, slides, and reading assignments in the above ways affords me the best chance of getting students to recognize the relevance of philosophical ideas. Honing critical skills is attained by *doing* philosophy. 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. (On this point, see Tab VI, item 4.) 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 further toward generating their own analyses. I might require them to offer a counter-example or to construct and analyze a scenario of their own making. For example, I asked students in my 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 philosophical ideas. 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 studying philosophy, I am explicit, especially in lower-year courses, about the relevance of critical thinking skills beyond academic philosophy.

(See final page of portfolio for bibliography.)

### 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 Humanities	Department Average (Not Available)	Division Average (Not Available)
<b>Standard Questions:</b>			
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	—	—
<b>Mean Evaluation:</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>

### 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**

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### Written Student Feedback (Complete & Unedited)

- “Mr. Dragos is a great professor! I enjoy his classes and he is very nice and easy going :)”
- “Professor Dracos has definitely been my favourite professor this semester, he's great at what he does and definitely made the learning experience great. School has never been something I enjoy or want to attend but this definitely changed with the interesting lectures that Professor Dracos provides, he is incredibly enthusiastic and knowledgeable. One of my favourite things he did was giving us activities at the end of the lecture to help us develop skills (academically and people skills).”
- “This course was a surprising treat. Going into it I wasn't sure I would grasp the concepts or enjoy the material but have found it to be enjoyable and engaging and that I have learnt a ton. Prof Dragos also provides excellent, detailed feedback on assignments in a timely manner. Really is there to help the students succeed!”
- “Chris is great, he speaks to us respectfully as peers almost and he teaches in a way easy for us to understand, but also at a university class.”
- “One of these best Prof's I have had so far in my academic career. A class I love very much and would love to have him as a teacher again.”
- “Professor Dragos has to be one of the most interesting and intelligent people I've ever met. He has extensive knowledge on various aspects of the humanities and was able to provide personal experiences to certain sections. Additionally he has brought in excellent guest speakers who have broken down concepts and explained their life paths in relatable ways. I thoroughly enjoy this class.”
- “The instructor is willing to accommodate for and foster the ability of students who struggle yet are willing and attempting to improve, he clearly cares about the students.

### 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
<b>Core Institutional Items:</b>			
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
<b>Core Institutional Mean:</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Divisional Items:</b>			
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
<b>Departmental Items:</b>			
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	—
<b>Instructor-Selected Items:</b>			
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	—	—

## Written Student Feedback (Complete & Unedited)

- “The overall quality of the instruction in this course was good! Chris Dragos was a very good and understanding professor, and very approachable when I required help. I liked the way the course is structured in terms of the division of grades. The assignments were reasonable, however because the content is very hard to understand at times, I found it hard to write the assignments. I am grateful for the feedback though as it helps me to improve. I also felt very unknowledgeable about the content and hesitated to participate in group discussions. This course is mainly based on the readings, and listening to peers' presentations on the readings and discussing ideas. Overall, the course was well organized.”
- “The instructor was very knowledgeable about each of the different sections, and was articulate and structured in both teaching and responding. It was clear to follow and helped me understand the material. I valued the overall class discussion because it helped to apply and connect the different authors' ideas.”
- “I like the seminar-style discussion, although I think the class would benefit from the instructor directly asking people about certain parts of the texts that we read, as opposed to simply walking us through it.”
- “I like the seminar style of this course, being the first one I've taken in my undergrad, I would definitely look for another one in the future. The material can be very heavy at times due to the multitude of material and ways of thinking about scientific theory acceptance and proliferation.”
- “Professor Dragos did an excellent job of going over the material for each week and in working through the weekly class presentations which made it quite easy to learn the material.”
- “I've never actually written a course evaluation, but wanted to this time around to describe the excellence in teaching I fell Ioan (Chris) displays. Ioan gave us a great variety of writing and presentation assignments. I learned volumes from the in class dialogues we had, where he let us explore our own thoughts and ideas. The material for this course was extremely thick, and difficult, and he made it manageable.”
- “Little instruction was given in the course, which is probably expected of most seminar-style courses.”
- “Students would give presentations and Chris would help guide discussion. If a student who was supposed to present was not there, Chris was always prepared with his own notes on the assigned reading and reading to step in so the class did not miss a beat. At times the discussions were hard to follow and Chris could have been more clear and concise with the points he would make during the discussions. I felt a lot of times that the language used in the discussions was above me and I found myself googling definitions to try and keep up with the conversation.”
- “Since there was no prerequisites for this course I was surprised to find that a lot of the examples that were used in the course were discussed like everyone had heard about them in other courses.”
- “Prof. Dragos was one of the best professors I have ever had. He made the course content enjoyable and he was always available to answer questions. Prof. Dragos is clearly a gifted and effective teacher. He helped to explain even very difficult concepts in a clear and approachable manner. The course was very well structured. Marking scheme is very fair and encourages the actual learning experience rather than the pure regurgitation seen in other courses.”
- “The office hours provided by the instructor was both accessible and sufficient for the size of the class. I never used office hours.”
- “Assistance that was available to support my learning in the course was teacher's office hours and we could always email the professor for help as well.”
- “It was helpful that the instructor's office hours were immediately after the class, because it allowed for further discussion or questions on a less structured basis.”
- “Chris Dragos has been very helpful. He is willing to listen to ideas and help deconstruct them in a way that is approachable in terms of then allowing the student to build it back up into a coherent argument for the student.”
- “I only had to email the professor a couple times but the responses came fast and were informative.”
- “Chris was a 24/7 email service provider. He had office hours after class, and was happy to arrange to meet other times. His assignments came with detailed instructions, and the responses from the marked assignments came back with detailed, thoughtful comments that helped me improve for the next.”
- “Chris offered office hours right after the lecture and was always prompt when responding to emails. I could tell he was taking this course seriously and I appreciated that.”
- “I am registered with accessibility services and Chris was very accommodating. Chris was available to discuss any assignments I had trouble with, review the marks I received on essays, and talk about content in the course.”

### 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
<b>Core Institutional Items:</b>			
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
<b>Core Institutional Mean:</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Divisional Items:</b>			
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
<b>Departmental Items:</b>			
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	—
<b>Instructor-Selected Items:</b>			
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	—	—

## Written Student Feedback (Complete & Unedited)

- “This is one of my most favorite Profs ever. I hope to take more of his classes.”
- “As a finance student I rarely get to voluntarily take courses like this, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was well taught and you could tell Chris really knew the depth of topics we discussed in class. I really got to appreciate the quality of his explanations - not all profs are able to make concepts easy to understand, especially philosophy topics. Some readings were very complex and confusing, but he was always able to break it down simply in lecture. My only piece of feedback would be that you can sometimes get very in-depth early on in the lecture and start explaining a plethora of things we don't understand yet. i.e. when we overview the course or topics we will cover, or future topic, you can go into terms and ideas we haven't gotten to yet. I understand why, but think it would be better to save the in-depth parts for when we reach the topic.”
- “The overall quality of instruction for this course was good. Course lectures are presented in a humourous and descriptive manner. While sometimes it is difficult to follow the instructor (sometimes, the instructor tries to explain the premise in detail while he is laying out the premise, and it makes it very difficult to follow), their was a comprehensive explanation on the subject matter. Without a tutorial, or a chance to meet the teaching assistant, students find it challenging to receive enough advice, and doubts the justification of the grades given. The instructor is very diligent and is willing to spend additional time to make the course more accessible and really goes out of his way to answer any concerns students may have.”
- “It was really clear what the instructor conveyed, even though there were a lot of complex ideas to summarize.”
- “Professor Dragos is honestly one of the kindest, most understanding and passionate professors I've been taught by in my undergrad (graduating this semester) He truly cares about the well being of his students, he understands and accomedates each student! For him, it's less about dead lines and more about giving his students the extra time to understand the context. He is available via email and phone when needed and is great with his marking! He's assignments and tests are fair and gives his students enough feedback so we know how to improve next time. I honestly really respect him!”
- “Overall the atomsphere was very accepting of questions and comments. The prof did a great job explaining the more confusing aspects of the class readings.”
- “This course was one of the best I have taken in my three years at UTM. Professor Dragos made the learning material very interesting and he instructed everything very well.”
- “Great course, professor was able to remain neutral on the topic of theology. Explained concepts clearly, tests and assignments were fair and fairly graded.”
- “After having completed my first degree at the University of Windsor, and now taking my first semester at the University of Toronto, I found this instructor to be the best one I have ever had. This instructor was able to invoke my interest to the highest degree. Throughout the course, the instructor remained very professional by being extra careful not to take the side of atheism or theism. In other words, he was remained objective and unbiased. Further, the professor created the best power point slides I have ever seen in any course taught at a University. He was able to condense the work and make it easier for me to understand the course material. I was able to grasp the content of this course to such a high degree that I felt comfortable teaching it to other people. As well, the instructor was always available for assistance when required. I would absolutely recommend this professor's classes, and because of him, I would also recommend the University of Toronto to anyone interested.”
- “Ioan Dragos was approachable and patient. In a philosophy class, some concepts/ideas are difficult to explain because they tend to get "wordy" and complicated. However, I found that he was very patient in explaining the concepts during lectures even when things were not as relatable. He makes very informative slides and is great at communicating in a professional yet not boring manner. The time of the class was 6pm-9pm and while I've typically found myself falling asleep or losing focus in other classes during this time, I did not find that in his class. Even when some of the readings were dry and complex, I found that Ioan Dragos still made things interesting.”
- “I would say that quality were very good, I enjoyed the class.”

- “I like the instruction, however, it was very long. I found it hard to keep my attention focused on the topic for 3 hours”
- “The instructions were clear and direct. The professor had the information well organized and reminded about the instruction at the beginning of the lectures and through announcements.”
- “He could benefit from breaking down concepts to a more every day person tone, he always remains in a philosopher tone and rarely simplifies things even when he claims to. He is very passionate about his topic, but sometimes found doing the readings of the textbook and his slides were easier to understand and learn the course from than his actual lectures. As he never really broke anything down to be easier.”
- “The prof knew what he was talking about. The subject matter was taught in a manner that was easily understandable.”
- “Professor Dragos is an excellent professor. I enjoyed attending lectures, he was very thorough and organized.”
- “The instructor for this course was excellent. He was very approachable and explained the material well. He answered questions sufficiently and was happy to offer help and feedback if asked.”
- “This Prof stayed much longer after every class to help students. He answered emails very promptly and allowed for great class discussions.”
- “Although there might have been difficulties with the teaching assistant and marking for this course, the instructor offers extra assistance for those who still have questions and is very accomodating to students' needs. The instructor was extremely meticulous with his slides which were beyond expectations and very assistive to students who took a longer time to understand the argument (because they could always look back and read the premises over and over again). The instructor also created an inclusive environment for students who were intimidated to speak up in class to explain their answers in detail with a written group submission at the end of each class. The instructor also provides lengthy and detailed answers to every student's question in class.”
- “Asking questions really helped to try and understand the material.”
- “He's always available via email and phone if needed! His office hours are great and he makes sure to constantly let his students know that he's there for them whenever needed. Before class, during break and after class he makes sure his students know they can approach him and he takes time to answer each one of our questions”
- “The facilitaed class discussions where a great way to clarify any confusing topics.”
- “The professor was very approachable, thus making it easy to ask questions.”
- “Assistance was available throughout the course primarily by the instructor himself. He made sure to be available whenever required. He was able to give feedback or help with an idea or question usually within the same day the of the email. At all times, the instructor was willing to help me and all the other students in the class.”
- “Ioan Dragos made sure that everyone knew when and where he was available for assistance from the very first day of classes.”
- “I was really happy that my teacher was always willing to provide feedback and answer all my questions.”
- “Office hours of the professor were supportive to my learning.”
- “Was very good and understanding as far as accommodations. Appreciated during tests he would visit the accessibility centre to see if I had any questions for him.”
- “The professor was always available during office hours and responded to emails very quickly.”
- “The instructor for this course offered support during the lecture/tutorial times, and through email. He made clear any ideas that were not clear, and would offer excellent feedback on what we could do next time to improve.”

### 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
<b>Core Institutional Items:</b>			
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
<b>Core Institutional Mean:</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Divisional Items:</b>			
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
<b>Departmental Items:</b>			
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	—
<b>Instructor-Selected Items:</b>			
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	—	—

### Written Student Feedback (Complete & Unedited)

- “The instructions of this course were very interesting. The slides were helpful.”
- “Professor could slow down the pace of talking. But overall great course!! Great! MR. Dragos is very good at being able to create an atmosphere that helps in courses like philosophy. He was really good with creating inclusive environment where we could ask questions. Put a lot of time into lecture slides as well.”
- “It was great, the instructor answered questions well and thoroughly and was happy to have discussions about course material. The material was presented in a simple and straightforward way, making it very clear.”
- “The instructor did a very good job and explained concepts very well making sure to explain anything that might be tricky or easy misconstrued.”
- “Very clear, maybe too much info on slides”
- “Great prof, really well organized lecture slides.”
- “The lectures itself involved a lot of reading off the slides (though not when the TAs made guest lectures). The tutorials were quite helpful.”
- “it was very engaging.”
- “Incredible. There were concrete efforts made both create channels for students to voice their feedback and to accommodate the needs voiced in such feedback. The instruction was clear, open, and extremely helpful. Plenty of room for and encouragement of dialogue.”
- “Verbal and visual presentation in lectures was useful and informative, though I fell into a trap of writing down what was on the slides more than focusing on the speaking notes. For me personally, releasing the slides after lecture or condensing the information on them would assist me in focusing more on spoken info, though I recognize that's sort of unreasonable to request because it's my personal issue.”
- “Very clear lecture notes. Wish though that there was more reference to specific pages in readings”
- “I know the acoustics in the room is bad, but could have used a mic to help.”
- “Very clear and analytic break down of course material.”
- “It was good, in that we received everything we needed in a fair manner. There was nothing in particular I disliked. I liked his sense of humor though.”
- “Was good, charismatic delivery and critical engagement with the questions of students.”
- “Slides were helpful but sometimes distracting”
- “Chris provided excellent instruction that identified and explained the central introductory concepts in the study of ethics.”
- “I thought the overall quality of the instruction was good. Information in lecture was presented in a logical manner, and the lecture slides clarified and simplified the often very dense topics. Questions were encouraged in class, but I found the questions to sometimes be too abstract and theoretical. As a result, the answers to these questions were sometimes long-winded and hard to follow, which confused my understanding of the topic.”

## 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](mailto: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 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 & Terrorism

*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 stresses the development of skills necessary for effective intellectual analysis and argumentation. This will be accomplished through short writing assignments and regular quizzes. Students will learn about the basic components of valid and sound arguments and come to recognize common fallacies of reasoning. This course also includes introductions to categorical and truth-functional logic. Students will translate written arguments from assigned readings into formal structures that can be evaluated for validity and soundness. In short, this course aims to foster skills for clear thinking, persuasive argumentation, and concise, cogent writing.

### **Required Texts:**

- (1) Moore & Parker (2017), *Critical Thinking 12<sup>th</sup> Edition* (McGraw Hill)
- (2) Supplementary readings on course page.

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings:**

#### **Week 1: Housekeeping & Overview**

*Readings:* None

#### **UNIT 1: NUTS & BOLTS & FALLACIES**

#### **Week 2: Argumentative Reasoning & Writing**

*Readings:* ch.2

#### **Week 3: Rhetoric—Credibility & Persuasion**

*Readings:* ch.4-5

#### **Week 4: Fallacies (& a Writing Primer ahead of Assignment 1)**

*Readings:* ch.6-7

#### **Week 5: Fallacies (cont'd)**

*Readings:* ch.7-8

#### **UNIT 2: CATEGORICAL LOGIC**

#### **Week 6: Categorical Claims, Translation, & Square of Opposition**

*Readings:* ch.9 (pp.TBA)

#### **Week 7: MIDTERM**

#### **Week 8: Categorical Operations, Categorical Syllogisms, & Validity**

*Readings:* ch.9 (pp.TBA)

#### **UNIT 3: TRUTH FUNCTIONAL LOGIC**

#### **Week 9: Truth Tables & Symbolization**

*Readings:* ch.10 (pp.TBA)

#### **Week 10: Deduction, Rules of Argumentation, & Truth Equivalency**

*Readings:* ch.10 (pp.TBA)

#### **Week 11: Induction**

*Readings:* ch.11

#### **Week 12: Final Exam (on material after midterm)**

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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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