

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Reality & What We Can Know of It

Course Number and Section:

PHILOSOP

1350F 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

In this age of fake news, climate change denial, global pandemics, anti-vaxxers, and our political and social leaders becoming ever-more willing to stretch the truth or deny facts outright, the study of epistemology and metaphysics is ever-more relevant. Many of these issues, and much of what we take ourselves to “know” about reality in general, depend upon fundamental but often unexamined philosophical assumptions. Should we trust an expert’s testimony or predictions? Can we trust our memories and perceptions? Our intuitions? Logic and mathematics? Science or faith? Can we be sure beliefs formed by these methods correspond to reality? Just what is “real”? Perhaps this is all a dream? From where do logical and ethical truths arise? We assume we have free will, that there are other minds, scientific facts, an external world—but how can we be sure? Such assumptions help us to make sense of our lives, but quickly evaporate upon philosophical reflection.

In this course we will examine some of these questions and the philosophical issues at their foundations. Our goal is to equip ourselves with tools and conceptual frameworks useful for navigating these issues, that we may attentively confront the realities of our modern age.

Learning Outcomes:

Recognize that our beliefs are underpinned by philosophical convictions
Means to critically evaluate those convictions
Improve writing, critical analysis, argumentative abilities
Gain basic working knowledge of several philosophical theories and approaches

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Course readings all posted on OWL.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Active Learning	Various	10
Argument Analysis	October 10	15

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Critical Writing	November 7	15
Argumentative Essay	November 21	25
Reflection	December 5	5
Final Exam	Fall exam period	30

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Tuesday, August 13, 2024