



First-year Philosophy
PH1001 (Introduction to Philosophy) &
PH1005 (Philosophy and Social Science: An Introduction)

University College Cork
2023-24

Lecturers:

Dr. Jason Dockstader
Dr. Danny Forde
Dr. Joel Walmsley
Dr. Adam Loughnane

The planned schedule for this module is as follows:¹

Class Times: Monday, 3-4pm, Boole 3 Wednesday, 12-1, Boole 2 Thursday, 10-11, Boole 3

Monday 18th September: “Political Theory: A Genealogy of Liberty” (Dr. Jason Dockstader)

Thursday 26th October **1st Test: Conducted in-class**

Monday 30th October Bank Holiday—No class

Wednesday 1st November “Value Theory: The Good Life” (Dr. Danny Forde)

Thursday 30th November **2nd Test: Conducted in-class**

—End of 1st Semester: Christmas Break—
—End of Module for students taking PH1005—

Monday 15th January— “What Sort of Thing is a Mind?”
Thursday 22nd February (Dr. Joel Walmsley)

Monday 5th February Bank Holiday—No class

Monday 26th February— “Existentialism East and West”
Thursday 18th April (Dr. Adam Loughnane)

Monday 18th March Bank Holiday—No class

Monday 25th March—April 4th Easter Recess—No class

Thursday 18th April **3rd Test: Conducted in-class**

—End of 2nd Semester—
—End of Module for students taking PH1001—

¹ Students taking PH1005 as part of the BSocSc degree are only required to participate in the first semester. Students taking PH1001 (e.g., as part of the BA degree) are required to participate in both semesters.

Section Descriptions:

This course is intended to give beginning students an idea of the variety of issues which are dealt with in philosophy. By addressing a number of different areas of the discipline, you will learn what some typical philosophical problems look like, how philosophers discuss these problems, and something of the range of different theories that have been developed in response to them. A common theme throughout the four sections of the module is freedom. We will focus on political, moral, mental, and existential freedom.

Section 1: “Political Theory: A Genealogy of Liberty” (Dr. Jason Dockstader)

This section of the module introduces students to political theory through a history of the main conceptions of political freedom or liberty found in the West. First, we will address the liberal tradition of understanding liberty as non-interference by focusing on the English political theorists Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill. Next we will discuss more positive conceptions of liberty as virtue, autonomy, and self-determination as found in classical sources, like Plato and Aristotle, and more modern sources, like T.H. Green and Hannah Arendt. Finally, we look at the republican tradition of conceiving liberty as non-domination, focusing on figures like Niccolò Machiavelli and Mary Wollstonecraft.

There will also be a visual element to this section of the module, as we will look at key pieces of art that appear to represent the respective conceptions of liberty we will be analyzing. For example, we will spend some time looking at the frontispiece to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Lorenzetti's frescoes, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, and Delacroix's famous piece, *Liberty Leading the People*. Ultimately, we will try to answer the question, of the conceptions of liberty we have studied, which is closest to our conception? The readings will be supplied on Canvas.

Section 2: “Value Theory: The Good Life” (Dr. Danny Forde)

In this section of the course we will consider what it means to live a good life. Does life have an intrinsic value? What is its ultimate aim? Is it pleasure? Happiness? Duty to ones friends and family? What does it mean to be virtuous? To answer these questions we will examine the ideas of Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, Mill and Kant. More importantly, we will examine the essential concepts themselves. What is good? What do we mean by right and wrong? How ought you conduct yourself? We will discuss three main schools of thought: virtue ethics, utilitarianism and deontology. Once we have a good understanding of what is at stake with each theory we will go one step further and ask what grounds any ethical or moral claim. Here we will discuss the ideas of Iris Murdoch and consider some contrasting metaethical positions. If I say that it's good to run over rabbits with my car, what makes that claim right or wrong? And what are the broader implications of answering that question? All readings will be posted on Canvas.

Section 3: “What Sort of Thing is a Mind?” (Dr. Joel Walmsley)

The mind is at once the most familiar and the most perplexing of all the phenomena in the universe. We all have one, and we all use it every day, yet the question of how it arises from the soggy lump of grey matter in our skulls seems utterly mysterious despite having been pondered for centuries. This section will introduce some fundamental issues in philosophy of mind, by considering the different ways that philosophers have addressed the question “What sort of thing is a mind?” Is it something ghostly, like a soul, as found in many religious traditions? Is it the same thing as the brain, the body or behaviour, as has been studied by the natural sciences? Perhaps it's not a thing at all, but rather a process, or an illusion, or something else? Could computers or animals have minds? What special problems arise when, as philosophers, we try to use our minds to examine ourselves?

Along the way, we will also pay careful and specific attention to some of the methods—the use of reasoning and argument, conceptual analysis, and “thought experiments”—that make philosophical approaches to these questions distinctive.

Section 4: “Existentialism East and West.” (Dr. Adam Loughnane)

A great deal of philosophy is concerned with sorting right from wrong (ethics), true from false (epistemology/logic), the real from the un-real (metaphysics/ontology). No doubt, these are indispensable philosophical pursuits, however, thinkers known as “existentialists” have come to focus on deeply meaningful human states that might not be best understood or lived according to the binary oppositions of the principal domains of philosophy. If we feel profound joy or suffering, our being “right” or “wrong” about the origin might not tell us what is most crucial about what we are living through. An overpowering emotion being “real” or “un-real” might not be the most consequential in terms of cultivating skills to augment or diminish those feelings. The experience of suffering, nihilism, authenticity, the feeling of the absurd, emptiness, or existential nausea, as well as positive feelings such as exalted joy, contentment, ecstasy, serenity, and enlightenment, these extremes of human experience have been contemplated by philosophers in both Eastern and Western worlds beyond the categories and logic of epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics.

In this section, we explore Western philosophers such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Pascal and existential novelists such as Camus, Kafka, and Beckett and the depiction of their writings in cinema. We also study philosophers from the East Asian world, including Buddhist and Daoist philosophers who have not only theorized but have also developed sophisticated and profound practices to modify one’s existential states. The leading question throughout this section of the module will be “how can existential thought contribute in concrete ways to our everyday life and our philosophical well-being?”

Reading Material:

The lecturer for each section will post electronic copies of additional reading materials specific to their section on the Canvas site for the module; these can be downloaded and read or printed as necessary. Note: it is at the discretion of the lecturer as to any additional materials (e.g., lecture notes) will be made available: do not assume that will be the case.

In addition, the following more general books, podcasts and websites may be of some interest:

- Blackburn, S. (2001) *Think* (Oxford University Press) (Library: Q+2 100 BLAC)
- Honderich, T. (ed.), (1995) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Q+2 R 103 OXFO)
- Blackburn, S. (2008) *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (available online via the UCC Library webpage).
- O’Hear, A. (1985) *What Philosophy Is* (Penguin)
- Baggini, J. (2006) *The Pig That Wants to Be Eaten* (Plume)
- Kukla, A. & Walmsley, J. (2006) *Mind: A Historical and Philosophical Introduction to the Major Theories* (Hackett) (Q+2 150 KUKL)
- Mumford, S. (2012) *Metaphysics: A Very Short Introduction*, (OUP)
- Mawson, T.J. (2005) *Belief in God: Introduction to Philosophy of Religion* (Clarendon Press)
- “Philosophy Bites” Podcast: <http://www.philosophybites.com/>
- “HiPhi Nation” Podcast: <https://hiphination.org/>
- Philosophy 24/7 Podcast: <http://philosophy247.org/>
- “The Partially Examined Life” Podcast: <http://partiallyexaminedlife.com/>
- “History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps” <http://historyofphilosophy.net/>

- BBC “In Our Time” Philosophy Podcast: <https://bbc.in/2vWk2Cs>
- “Wireless Philosophy” on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WirelessPhilosophy>
- “What is Philosophy” CrashCourse: <https://bit.ly/2lUKUy5>
- Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Assessment & Examinations:

Assessment for both PH1001 (First Arts Philosophy) and PH1005 (First Social Science Philosophy) is made up entirely of “Continuous Assessment,” consisting of (i) written tests and (ii) attendance and participation at tutorials. **There is no summer examination for First Year Philosophy.**

Assessment is structured as follows:

PH1001: (i) All three tests, worth a combined total of 75%. (i.e., 25% each)
(ii) Attendance and Participation at Tutorials, worth 25%

PH1005: (i) The first two tests (i.e., 1st semester only), worth a combined total of 75%
(ii) Attendance and Participation at Tutorials, worth 25%

Tests:

The first in-class test will take place on **Thursday, October 26th**. It will cover material from Dr. Dockstader’s section. The second in-class test will take place on **Thursday, November 30th**. It will cover the material you studied with Dr. Forde. Both lecturers will provide you with further details of the nature and format nearer the time.

The third in-class test (for PH1001 only) will take place on **Thursday, April 18th 2024**, and will cover all of the material you studied in the second semester (with Dr. Walmsley and Dr. Loughnane). Again, lecturers will say more about the nature and format of these tests at the appropriate times.

Please mark these dates in your calendar at the beginning of the academic year. If you are unwell, or face some other emergency at the time of a test, please notify the lecturer by email as soon as reasonably possible and, if necessary, provide appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor’s certificate; in such cases, the department will make ad-hoc arrangements for a make-up test. Students are expected to make email contact with the relevant lecturer immediately and to provide relevant documentation within two weeks of their absence.

Optional Essays:

In addition to the tests, lecturers will assign optional essay titles that help focus your study. It is strongly recommended that you do these essays, submit them to your tutor, and receive advice and feedback as preparation for the tests. Completing the essays will get you additional marks towards your “attendance and participation” grade.

Late registration:

If you transfer into philosophy after the start of term, it is your responsibility to contact the lecturer concerned, and Dr. Jason Dockstader, in order to help you catch up on what you have missed. If you transfer into philosophy before the end of the 4th week of the first semester, you will still be required to take the first test with the rest of the class. If you transfer into philosophy after that date, ad hoc arrangements may be facilitated as necessary.

Procedures for repeat examinations:

If you receive a failing mark for First Arts Philosophy overall (i.e., less than 40% in total), then you will be required to sit a 3-hour Supplemental ('Repeat' or 'Autumn') Examination in August 2024

For more details, please see the entries for PH1001 and PH1005 in the Book of Modules, here:

<https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/modules/>

Tutorials:

In addition to the three weekly lectures, students must sign up for a weekly tutorial. Each student is asked to register for a tutorial that is consistent with their schedule of lectures. Tutorials are in person. In order to sign up for a tutorial, you must go to the Canvas page for this module, click on 'People,' then click on 'Group,' then click 'Join' for the tutorial you prefer. You cannot change your tutorial once you sign-up unless there are extreme circumstances. In such a situation, you must contact Dr. Dockstader (j.dockstader@ucc.ie). Note that participation in tutorials will be graded, and will count for 25% of a student's overall marks:

In the past, we have noticed a very high positive correlation between good attendance and participation, and good marks in the in-class test, so please make the most of the tutorials by being an active participant; do not expect to 'get by' on lectures and online material alone. Tutorials will start in the week beginning September 25th 2023.

Websites

Department of Philosophy: <https://www.ucc.ie/philosophy>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PhilosophyDepartmentUcc>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uccphilosophy>
Canvas: <https://ucc.instructure.com>

Contacts

- **Prof. Don Ross** is the Head of Department in Philosophy, and may be contacted on 021-490-2354 or at don.ross931@gmail.com
- **Dr. Jason Dockstader** is the First Year Philosophy co-ordinator, and may be contacted about any practical queries, problems etc., that arise in connection with your study of Philosophy in first year. Email: j.dockstader@ucc.ie.
- **Dr. Robert Parker** will be the senior tutor for First Year Philosophy, and may be contacted with any practical queries, problems etc., that arise in connection with your tutorials. E-mail: robertjparker5@gmail.com.
- **Colette Connolly** is the Departmental Administrator for Philosophy. She can be contacted on 021-490-2588 and at c.connolly@ucc.ie

**The Philosophy Department is located at:
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