PHIL 102 (002)– Introduction to Philosophy
2017 – 18 Winter Term 1
Mon, Wed, Fri, 10:00 – 11:00
Buchanan A Building (BUCH A), room 103

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"To teach how to live without certainty and yet without being paralysed by hesitation is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy, in our age, can do for those who study it."

— Bertrand Russell
A History of Western Philosophy (1945)

This course offers an introduction to philosophy via an exploration of various practical puzzles and "paradoxes" found in contemporary moral philosophy, value theory, and decision theory. These include: the problem of the nature of morality, the trolley problem, the problem of moral luck, the nonidentity problem, Parfit's repugnant conclusion, the prisoner's dilemma, and Newcomb's paradox. While we will sometimes consider putative solutions to such problems, the aim of this course is not to settle on any one of them. Rather, the aim is to develop a general interest in philosophy by studying various problems that afflict contemporary ethical and practical theorizing. No prior familiarity with philosophy is required for this course.

Required text
This course does not require the purchase of any book. Most readings can be freely accessed online through the university library (on campus or via VPN). Such readings are hyperlinked on the reading schedule. Those that cannot be accessed online are posted on Connect

While there is no textbook for this course, you are required to purchase a subscription for *TopHat*, an online teaching platform. Subscriptions can be purchase at the following website:

- https://tophat.com/

Subscriptions cost $24 for the term. The join code is **TBD**.
Using this software requires that you have either a laptop or a smartphone with access to the university Wi-Fi during certain lectures (see reading schedule for specific dates). Please see me after class if you do not have access to this technology.

Course requirements and method of evaluation
4 in-class quizzes (5% each, 20% total)
2 short papers, 4 – 5 pages each (20% each, 40% total)
Final examination (35%)
Participation (5%)

Policy on lateness
Papers turned in late without an extension will be penalised at the rate of 5% *per calendar day*. No extensions will be given on papers except for medical reasons. Requests for extensions must be supported by appropriate medical documentation. The deadline for requesting an extension is one business day before a paper is due. *No make-up quizzes will be granted under any circumstance.* If you are not in class during an in-class quiz, you will receive a mark of zero.

Policy on laptops and cell phones
The use of laptops, tablets, and smart phones with access to the university Wi-Fi is essential for certain components of this class. So, laptops, tablets, and smart phones are permitted, as long as they are used for class-related purposes. In-class quizzes, for example, require the use of *TopHat*, which requires that you have Wi-Fi access. *It is your responsibility to make sure you come to class prepared with Wi-Fi accessibility.* Please refer to the reading schedule for further information. Please note, however, that even if laptops, tablets, and smart phones are permitted in class, surfing the web can be distracting for other students around you. Please refrain from surfing the web during class.

Participation
As stated above, your participation in the course counts for 5% of your final mark. Other than contributing to *TopHat* surveys (see reading schedule), there are no specific criteria by which I evaluate student participation. Your participation in this course will be evaluated holistically. I may, on occasion, decide to take attendance via *TopHat,* but I do not take mere class attendance to be sufficient for receiving any participation marks. In addition to attending class, receiving participation marks requires active contribution—either in class or during office hours—by asking questions, offering comments, and generally engaging with the course material.

Recording lectures
Lectures will not be recorded. You will need to come to class in person in order to hear the lecture. No student may record a lecture without permission of the instructor.

Text-matching software
Be advised that papers may be submitted to text-matching software (e.g. Turnitin).

Connect
Students are expected to check the course webpage on *Connect* at least once a week for any announcements or postings.

Copyright
Instructor-generated course material (e.g., handouts, outlines, summaries, exam questions, etc.), including material posted on *Connect* are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.

Academic honesty and integrity

Here is a statement from the UBC website:
"Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of the University of British Columbia as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.
It is the student's obligation to inform himself or herself of the applicable standards for academic honesty. Students must be aware that standards at the University of British Columbia may be different from those in secondary schools or at other institutions. If a student is in any doubt as to the standard of academic honesty in a particular course or assignment, then the student must consult with the instructor as soon as possible, and in no case should a student submit an assignment if the student is not clear on the relevant standard of academic honesty. If an allegation is made against a student, the Registrar may place the student on academic hold until the President has made his or her final decision. When a student is placed on academic hold, the student is blocked from all activity in the Student Service Centre."

Students should also familiarise themselves with UBC regulation on plagiarism:
(http://vpacademic.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/ubc-regulation-on-plagiarism/).

Tentative Reading Schedule

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Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1		
Wed. 6 Sep.	Introduction	▪ Course outline, syllabus
Fri. 8	What is philosophy?	▪ Korcz. What is philosophy?
Week 2		
Mon. 11	Argumentation	▪ Handout on argumentation
Wed. 13		▪ Handout on argumentation, cont'd.
*Fri. 15	In-class quiz	▪ No readings
Week 3		
*Mon. 18	Morality: Relative or absolute?	▪ Introduction (no readings), *TopHat* survey ▪
Wed. 20		▪ Benedict. (1934). Anthropology and the Abnormal.
Fri. 22		▪ Rachels. (1986). The challenge of cultural relativism.
Week 4	.	
Mon. 25		▪ Rachels. (1986). Cont'd. ▪
Wed. 27		▪ Harman. (1975). Moral relativism defended.
Fri. 29		▪ Harman. (1975). Cont'd. ▪
Week 5		
*Mon. 2 Oct.	In-class quiz	▪ No readings
*Wed. 4	The trolley problem	▪ Introduction (no readings), *TopHat* survey
Fri. 6		▪ Thomson. (1976). Killing, letting die, and the trolley problem.
Week 6		
Mon. 9	Thanksgiving Holiday	▪ University Closed
Wed. 11		▪ Thomson. (1985). The trolley problem.
Fri. 13 *First paper topics posted on Connect*	Essay writing	▪ Horban (1993). Writing a Philosophy Paper ▪ Horban (2005). Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing

Week 7		
*Mon. 16	Blame, responsibility, and alternate possibilities	▪ No readings, *TopHat* survey
Wed. 18		▪ Frankfurt. (1969). Alternate possibilities and moral responsibility.
Fri. 20 *First paper due at the beginning of lecture*		▪ Frankfurt. (1969). Cont'd.

Week 8		
Mon. 23		▪ Van Inwagen. (1999). Moral responsibility, determinism, and the ability to do otherwise.
Wed. 25		▪ Van Inwagen. (1999). Cont'd.
Fri. 27	Moral Luck	▪ Williams. (1976). Moral Luck.

Week 9		
Mon. 30		▪ Williams. (1976). Cont'd.
Wed. 1 Nov.		▪ Nagel. (1976). Moral Luck.
Fri. 3		▪ Nagel. (1976). Cont'd.

Week 10		
*Mon. 6	In-class quiz	▪ No reading
*Wed. 8	The nonidentity problem	▪ Introduction (no readings), *TopHat* survey
Fri. 10		▪ Roberts. (2009). The nonidentity problem. (Up to section 3)

Week 11		
Mon. 13	Remembrance Day Holiday	University Closed
Wed. 15 *Second paper topics posted on Connect*		▪ Smolkin. (1999). Toward a rights-based solution to the non-identity problem.
Fri. 17		▪ Smolkin. (1999). Cont'd.

Week 12		
*Mon. 20	The repugnant conclusion	▪ Introduction (no readings), *TopHat* survey
Wed. 22		▪ Parfit. (2004). Overpopulation and the quality of life.
Fri. 24		▪ Rachels. (1998). Counterexamples to the transitivity of better than.

Week 13		
*Mon. 27	Prisoner's dilemma	▪ *TopHat* Survey

		▪ Kuhn. (2012). Prisoner's Dilemma. (Up to section 2)
Wed. 29	Newcomb's paradox	Holt. (2002). Thinking inside the boxes.
*Fri. 1 Dec. *Second paper due at the beginning of class*	In-class quiz	No readings

*Access to the university Wi-Fi (via laptop, tablet, or smart phone) is required on these dates.