

**SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME  
PHIL 307: THEORIES OF EXISTENCE  
TRIMESTER 1 2011  
28 February to 2 July 2011**

**Trimester dates**

Teaching dates: 28 February to 3 June 2011

Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 1 May 2011

Study week: 6–10 June 2011

Examination/Assessment period: 10 June to 2 July 2011

Please note that this course will have an examination during the university examination period.

**Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

**Lecturer:** Dr J L Shaw  
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4764-975 (home)  
**Email:** jay.shaw@vuw.ac.nz  
**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 3.00 – 5.00 pm

**Class time and location:**

**Lecture Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays 1.10pm – 3.00 pm  
**Lecture Venue:** Murphy LT 102

**Course Delivery:**

This course will involve two 2-hour lectures per week. Students are encouraged to take part in discussion.

**Communication of additional information:**

Any additional information or handouts will be announced, circulated in the lectures or via Blackboard.

**Course content:**

In this course we will discuss concepts of existence in ancient, modern and contemporary western philosophy. This course will investigate the theories of existence in philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Frege, Russell, Quine, and existentialist philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. Topics include singular and general existence, existence and essence, particular and universal, existence and predicate, existence and description, and the nature of human existence. See separate handout entitled 'Reading List and Course Outline'.

**Learning objectives:**

By the end of the course, students should:

- (a) Be familiar with some of the systems of western philosophy such as idealism, realism, and existentialism;
- (b) Have an understanding of theories of meaning and existence;
- (c) Be aware of metaphysical presuppositions of some of the contemporary philosophers such as Frege, Russell and Quine;
- (d) Be able to compare and contrast the arguments of philosophers.

**Graduate attributes:**

As with all PHIL courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making. For more details please consult our website

[www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/subjects/phil.aspx#grad-attributes](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/subjects/phil.aspx#grad-attributes)

**Expected workload:**

In accordance with Faculty of Humanities and Social Science guidelines the overall workload for this course is 200 hours in total.

**Readings:****Essential texts:**

Students should purchase the PHIL 307 Course Book.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 7 February to 11 March 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 3 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop the day after placing an order online.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays)

10.00 am – 1.00 pm Saturdays.

Phone: 463 5515

**Assessment requirements:**

One three-hour examination, carrying 40% of the final assessment, and two essays, each carrying 30% of the final assessment. The final examination is open-book and the examination/assessment period is from 10 June to 2 July 2011.

The essays will emphasize both the critical thinking and the in-depth research of the students on some of the topics discussed in the class. The final exam will focus on the comprehension or understanding of the subject, as the students will be answering several questions. Hence it will supplement the in-depth research of the students. The exam will also demonstrate familiarity with systems of Western philosophy, such as realism, idealism and existentialism.

As a result, students will be able to compare and contrast the arguments of philosophers, both modern and contemporary.

**Final Essays:** The first essay will be due on 29 April 2011 and the second one will be due on 3 June 2011. An essay may not exceed 3,000 words. Overlaps between exam and essay topics are to be avoided.

**Method of Submission:**

All final essays are to be submitted digitally in Blackboard.

**Directions for submission via Blackboard:**

- click on the 'Assignments' icon in the course menu (to the left of the page).
- select 'View/Complete Assignment' for the relevant assignment.
- click the 'Browse' icon, and then select your essay.
- then click 'Submit'.

**Penalties**

Students will be penalised for late submission of essays—a deduction of 2.5% for each day. Penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds, e.g., illness (presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary) or similar other contingencies. In these cases, you must notify the course coordinator as soon as possible.

**Return of assignments:**

Essays will be in the main office of the Philosophy Programme (MY 518). They can be picked up between 2.00 – 3.00 pm. Essay results will be available on Blackboard approximately 2 weeks after submission.

**Mandatory course requirements:**

All students enrolled in the course will be entitled to sit the final examination. Hence there are no mandatory course requirements.

**Attendance:**

Students are advised to attend lectures and take an active role in discussion, although attendance is not a requirement for terms or assessment.

**Class Representative**

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

**Statement on legibility**

Students are expected to write clearly. Where work is deemed 'illegible', the options are:

- the student will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame after which penalties will apply;
- the student will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) and lateness penalties apply;

- if the student does not transcribe it to an acceptable standard, the work will be accepted as 'received' (so any associated mandatory course requirements are met) but not marked.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

### **WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION**

*The following text must be included in all course outlines.*

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study). Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic)

**Essay Topics:**

1. Plato on existence
2. Aristotle on categories
3. Kant on possibility, actuality and necessity
4. Existence and predicate
5. Existence and being
6. Russell on existence
7. Definitions of existence
8. Existence and essence
9. Existentialism and humanism
10. Existentialism and freedom
11. The nature of human beings
12. Sartre on bad faith.