SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 409: Topics in Contemporary Philosophy
CRN: 1075

TRIMESTER 1 and 2 2011
28 February to 12 November 2011

Trimester dates
Teaching dates: 28 February to 14 October
Teaching dates for first module: 28 February to 8 April
Teaching dates for second module: 11 April to 3 June
Teaching dates for third module: 11 July to 19 August
The taught portion of all courses at 400-level will end after 18 weeks, in order to allow students time to focus on their PHIL 489 research essays. During the final six weeks of the term, it is expected that you will be working on your research essays, and staff will be available for meetings, consultations and advice.

Withdrawal dates
Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds.aspx

Names and contact details

Ed Mares (Course Coordinator) MY618 (04) 463-5234 Edwin.Mares@vuw.ac.nz Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3pm and by appointment	Jay Shaw MY613 (04) 463 8936 Jay.Shaw@vuw.ac.nz Office Hours: Monday 3-5pm and by appointment	Ken Perszyk MY718 (04) 463-7410 Ken.Perszyk@vuw.ac.nz Office Hours: by appointment

Class times and locations
Lecture time: Wednesday 15:10-17:00
Lecture venue: Murphy 617

Course delivery
There will be one two-hour lecture per week. Students will be expected to have done some set reading for each lecture, and must come prepared to contribute to discussion of the reading.

Communication of additional information
Additional information will be conveyed to students, for example via Blackboard.

Course content
The course will be split into three six-week modules.

Module 1: Realism and Anti-Realism
This section of the course will consist of a discussion of types of *global anti-realism*. Realists hold that there are facts about the world that are independent of what we think the world is like. Anti-realists hold, to the contrary, that the way things are is somehow dependent on the way we think they are or on the way in which we collect evidence. We will examine Philip Pettit's global response-dependence, Michael Dummett's justificationism, and varieties of Kantianism. All readings will be put on Blackboard.

Module 2: Knowledge and Doubt
This section of the course will discuss the problem of knowledge and scepticism. We will read sources from both Western and Eastern philosophy. Topics covered will include: The relationship between knowledge and belief; how or whether we can understand and think about contradictions; the relationship between justification and knowledge; Western and Eastern views about the nature of doubt and scepticism.

Module 3: Free Will and Moral Responsibility
This section of the course will explore the contours of contemporary debates about free will and moral responsibility.

Learning objectives
Students passing the course should be able to engage critically with recent research in the field of contemporary philosophy.

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

Expected workload
During the first eighteen teaching weeks of trimester, there will be two contact hours a week. Independent working hours during teaching weeks should average at four hours per week. Independent work during other periods (researching and writing up the essay) should equal roughly 64 hours per module.

Readings
Essential texts: Readings will be posted on Blackboard. Students may be expected to do some additional research using the Philosopher's Index, a library database (http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/research/databases/p.aspx).

Assessment requirements:
The assessment will be based on three essays. One essay must be written on each section of the course.

Students are required to write one essay for each of the three modules. Each essay should be between 4000 and 4500 words. Each essay will count for one third of your overall assessment. Essay questions and instructions for each module will be posted on Blackboard on or before the first lecture for that module.

The first essay will be due on 9 May 2011. The second essay will be due on 11 July 2011. The third essay will be due on 19 September 2011. Each essay is designed to partially assess how well students have met the learning objective. Essays should be submitted by 10:00am on the due date.

All essays must be submitted in two ways. A copy of the essay must first be submitted digitally via blackboard (select 'assignments' icon in the course menu). Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. The title of your file should follow the following format: last name, underscore, first name, dot, doc (for example: brock_stuart.doc). A hard copy of the essay must then be submitted to Sophia Zhao in MY518. The hard copy will not be graded unless there is a problem with your blackboard submission. In such cases, students will be required to re-enter an identical copy to blackboard at their earliest convenience.

All essays will be submitted to and evaluated by turnitin.com, an online plagiarism detection service, before being graded. Plagiarized essays (no matter what the extent of the plagiarism) will receive an automatic zero. Extreme cases may result in University academic disciplinary procedures being invoked.

Penalties
There will be a penalty of 5 points per day for late essays.

There will be no penalty for exceeding the word limit, but precision is a virtue in philosophy, and exceeding the word limit is a sign that you are padding your essay or have not focussed narrowly enough on the topic.

Mandatory course requirements
None

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. His or her name and contact details will be posted on blackboard. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

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

Use of Turnitin
Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine http://www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION
Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at 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. Most statutes and policies are available at 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 (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.