



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME  
PHIL 105: The Big Questions**

**TRIMESTER 1 2013  
4 March – 3 July 2013**

**Trimester dates**

Teaching dates: 4 March to 7 June 2013  
Easter break: 28 March to 3 April 2013  
Mid-trimester break: 22–28 April 2013  
Study week: 10–14 June 2013  
Examination/Assessment Period: 14 June to 3 July 2013

**Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds)

**Names and contact details**

Course Coordinator: Professor Richard Joyce  
Room No.: MY 713  
Email: richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz  
Office hours: By appointment

Lecturer: Dr Ramon Das  
Room No.: MY 608  
Email: ramon.das@vuw.ac.nz  
Office hours: Tuesday 9:30-10:30 or by appointment

**Class times and locations**

Can be found on the Victoria website at:  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/subjects/coursecatalogue>  
It is advisable to check the above for any changes to the timetable programme.

**Lecture Time:** Tues, Wed, Fri 9-10  
**Lecture Venue:** Maclaurin (MC)LT103

**Tutorial/Seminar:**

For Tutorial/Seminar times and venue see the website below:  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/lecture-timetable.aspx>  
Tutors will be announced in class and on Blackboard

### **Teaching/learning summary**

PHIL105 will involve three 50-minute lectures and one 50-minute tutorial per week. The presumption is that each student will attend all classes (so if information is given in lectures or tutorials, we will assume that all students have it).

### **Communication of additional information**

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the PHIL 105 Blackboard site.

### **Course prescription**

This course considers some of the most important and difficult questions about life and humanity. Topics may include: What is the meaning of life? Does life have any meaning? Is there a God? Are we free? Is there a single true morality? Is there life after death? What is happiness?

### **Course content**

Ramon Das will teach the first 4 weeks of the course on the topics of religion, moral relativism, and moral luck. Richard Joyce will teach weeks 5-8 on the topics of human nature, the meaning of life, death, and happiness. Weeks 9-12 will again be taught by Ramon, on free will and the question of "What is a just society/world?"

### **Learning objectives**

Students who pass this course should be able to: demonstrate a broad introductory-level knowledge of, and an ability to critically analyse some of the central philosophical issues in the topics covered in the course.

### **Graduate attributes**

As with all Philosophy 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/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes>

### **Expected workload**

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 200 hours to PHIL 105 throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures, and tutorials, completion of all set weekly readings and research and writing for set assessment tasks.

### **Readings**

There is no set text for PHIL105. Weekly readings will be made available on Blackboard throughout the course of the trimester.

## Assessment requirements

PHIL 105 is assessed on the basis of one in-class test, one essay, and a final examination:

1. *In-Class Test*: The in-class test, which is worth 15% of the final grade, will be held on Tuesday April 9, during the usual lecture time. The test consists of one essay question.
2. *Essay*: The essay should be approximately 2,000 words and must be typed. It is worth 35% of the final grade. Essays must be submitted electronically to Blackboard; a hard copy is not required. The essay is due no later than 5:00pm on Friday May 17. The essay topics will be available on the assignments page of Blackboard. **Please note that essay extensions will be granted only for doctor-verified medical reasons or other emergencies.**
3. *Final examination*: The date and time will be announced later in the trimester, but it will fall sometime between June 14 and July 3. The examination comprises four essay questions, and is worth 50% of the final grade.

The in-class test will assess your knowledge of the material covered in lectures during the first part of the course, the essay will assess your knowledge of the topics and ability to critically analyse the central philosophical issues, and the examination will focus on the comprehension and understanding of the topics covered throughout the course.

## Penalties

Philosophy Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised. For each week or part thereof of lateness, a late assignment gets a 5 point penalty, up to three weeks, after which the assignment will get a zero mark. (i.e. 1-7 days late a loss of 5%; 8-14 days late a loss of 10 %; 15-21 days late a loss of 15%, and after that a zero mark.) Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but **require the student to provide documentation**. If granted an extension, students must agree to a new due date. Contact your lecturer as soon as a problem emerges. Extension forms are available in the School office.

## Mandatory course requirements

There are no mandatory course requirements for PHIL105.

## Return of marked course work

Essays and tests will be returned at times to be advised. If students fail to attend these times, they may collect their essay from the School Office, Room 518, Murphy Building between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday and must show their Student ID card before collection.

## Class representative

A class representative will be elected in the first week, 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. You can find out more information on Class Representatives on the VUWSA website.

## **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>

## **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](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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic).