



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 307: Theories of Existence
20 POINTS**

TRIMESTER 2 2013

Important dates

Trimester dates: 15 July to 17 November 2013

Teaching dates: 15 July to 18 October 2013

Mid-trimester break: 26 August to 8 September 2013

Study period: 21–25 October 2013

Examination/Assessment Period: 25 October to 16 November 2013

Note: students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Class times and locations

Lectures: Tuesday, Thursday, 11:00 - 12:50

Lecture Venue: New Kirk (KK) 204

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Dr Jay Shaw

Room No: Murphy (MY) 613

Phone: 463-8936

Email: jay.shaw@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: Mondays and Fridays 11:00 am - 12:50 pm

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 307 Blackboard site.

Prescription

An examination of a central topic in metaphysics - the nature of existence. A wide range of authors is studied, including major historical figures, like Kant, and modern philosophers from both the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy and from the continental European tradition, such as Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre.

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.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Be familiar with some of the systems of western philosophy such as idealism, realism, and existentialism;
2. Have an understanding of theories of meaning and existence;
3. Be aware of metaphysical presuppositions of some of the contemporary philosophers such as Frege, Russell and Quine;
4. Compare and contrast the arguments of philosophers.

Teaching format

This course will involve two two-hour lectures per week. There are no tutorials for this course. Students are expected to attend classes regularly, take part in class discussion, and keep up with the reading.

Mandatory course requirements

Other than achieving an overall pass mark of 50% there are no mandatory course requirements.

Workload

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

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	One essay (3000 words)	30%	1, 2	20 September
2	One essay (3000 words)	30%	1, 2	18 October
3	One three hour examination	40%	3, 4	

The essays will emphasise 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.

Overlaps between exam and essay topics are to be avoided.

Essay Topics:

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

Group work

There is no group work for this course.

Submission and return of work

All final essays are to be submitted digitally in Blackboard.

Directions for submission via Blackboard:

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

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.

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.

Set texts

PHIL 307 Book of Readings available from vicbooks.

Recommended reading

See separate handout entitled 'Reading List and Course Outline'.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course

Student feedback

There have been no changes to the course since last taught. Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades
- Graduate attributes: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes>
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz