



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME

PHIL 105: The Big Questions

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2015

Important dates

Trimester dates: 2 March to 1 July 2015

Teaching dates: 2 March to 5 June 2015

Easter/Mid-trimester break: 3–19 April 2015

Study period: 8–12 June 2015

Examination/Assessment Period: 12 June to 1 July 2015

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/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

	Stream 1 (CRN 1004)	Stream 2 (CRN 27002)
Lectures:	Mon, Wed, & Fri - 10.00am-10.50am	Mon, Wed, & Fri - 3.10pm-4.00pm
Venue:	Hunter LT323	Maclaurin LT101

Tutorials:

Students must sign up to a tutorial group using S-Cubed. Tutorials begin in week 2 of the trimester. Tutors will be announced in class and on Blackboard. For tutorial times and venues see: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables. A list of tutorial topics will be available at the start of term (posted on Blackboard). The topic of each week's tutorial will be the material covered in lectures in the previous week.

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Richard Joyce
Room No: Murphy 713
Phone: 463 5699
Email: richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: By appointment

Lecturer: Ken Perszyk
Room No: Murphy 718
Phone: 463 7410
Email: ken.perszyk@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: By appointment

Lecturer: Felice Marshall
Room No: Murphy 812
Email: felice.marshall@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: By appointment

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 that 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 course Blackboard site.

Prescription

This course considers some of the most difficult questions about life. Possible topics: What's the meaning of life? Does God exist? What is human nature? Are we free? Is there a single true morality? Is there life after death? Would it be good to live forever? What is happiness?

Course content

The first four weeks of the course are taught by Richard Joyce. Richard's lectures will address the following questions: What is the meaning of life? What is human nature? Are humans always selfish? What is happiness? Weeks 5-8 will be taught by Felice Marshall, who will discuss the questions "What do we know?" and "How do we know it?" The final four weeks of the course are taught by Ken Perszyk, who will cover the following topics: Is there a God? What's so bad about death? Is time travel possible?

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. demonstrate a broad introductory-level knowledge of the topics covered in the course
2. apply this knowledge in the critical analysis to the central philosophical issues raised by these topics
3. develop and practice their critical writing skills.

Teaching format

PHIL105 is delivered as three 50-minute lectures per week and a 50-minute tutorial per week. There are two streams for the lectures (i.e., all 10.00am lectures are repeated, at a different venue, at 3.10pm of the same day).

Lectures: The lectures are a core foundation for learning.

Tutorials: The tutorials reinforce the lecture experience and allow students to discuss the material in an informal small group setting.

Mandatory course requirements

There are no mandatory requirements for PHIL 105.

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 year. An approximate indication of the hours to be spent on each component of the course is as follows:

Preparation and attendance at classes	100 hours	
<i>Breakdown of assessment:</i>		
In-class tests	15 hours	
Tutorial exercises	15 hours	
Essay	35 hours	
Examination	35 hours	(= total 200 hours)

Assessment

Assessment Item	Weighting	CLOs	Due Date
In-class test	15%	1,2,3	27 March
Tutorial exercises (best 5 out of 6)	15%	1,2	See below
Essay, 2000 words	35%	1,2,3	8 May - 5.00 pm
Final Exam (two hours)	35%	1,2,3	12 June to 1 July

- In-class test:** An in-class test will be held on Friday March 27, during the usual lecture time. (The test given at the afternoon lecture time will not be the same as the one given at the morning lecture time.)
- Tutorial exercises:** Over the course of the trimester there will be six exercises held during tutorials. A student's *five* best test results will count toward 15% of his/her final grade (and the weakest result will be ignored). These tests begin in week 2 of term (i.e., the first tutorial), and thereafter in weeks 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12. These will be very short tests, more like mini-quizzes. There will be no make-up tests for students who miss the tutorial without a documented excuse.
- Essay:** The essay should be approximately 2000 words long 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, 8 May**. The essay topics will be available on Blackboard.
- Final examination:** The date and time will be announced later in the trimester, but will fall some time between 12 June and 1 July. The exam consists of three essay questions, and is worth 35% of the final grade.

The tutorial exercises will assess your knowledge of the material covered in lectures during the previous week, the in-class test will assess your understanding of the material given in previous weeks, the essay will assess your knowledge of the topics and ability to critically analyze the central philosophical issues, and the examination will focus on the comprehension and understanding of the topics in the latter part of the course.

Submission and return of work

Essays must be submitted electronically to Blackboard; a hard copy is not required. The title of your file should have the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, dot, doc/docx (for example: smith_john.docx). Please also ensure that pages are numbered. Grades and comments will be posted on Blackboard.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material.

Extensions and penalties

- All extensions must be obtained directly from the course coordinator, Richard Joyce.
- Late submission of assessment tasks will not get a grade higher than a C- unless the student contacts the course coordinator as soon as practically possible to explain the lateness (preferably before the assessment task is due to be submitted). The circumstances under which an extension will be considered are outlined in section 3.2.1 of the Assessment Handbook. (See)
- For tutorial exercises, there will be no make-up tests.

Set texts

There is no required textbook for PHIL 105. Every week there is a set reading posted on Blackboard which students will be expected to have read prior to the lectures, and to have thought about (and be ready to discuss) for the following week's tutorial.

In addition, lecturers will post extra readings on Blackboard grouped according to topic.

Recommended reading

Simon Blackburn's book, *The Big Questions*, provides useful background reading (but is not an official textbook).

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. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course. 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/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats

- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz