



**School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations  
Te Hunga Aro Whakamuri**

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME  
Trimester 2, 2007**

**PHIL105: THE BIG QUESTIONS  
CRN 1004**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Coordinator:** Nick Agar  
**Room:** Murphy Building, MY601  
**Phone:** 4635046  
**Email:** nicholas.agar@vuw.ac.nz  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday 10-12

**Lecturer:** David Eng  
**Room:** Murphy Building, MY716  
**Phone:** 4635699  
**Email:** david.eng@vuw.ac.nz  
**Office Hours:** Monday 10-12

**Lecturer:** Stuart Brock  
**Room:** Murphy Building, MY701  
**Phone:** 4636970  
**Email:** stuart.brock@vuw.ac.nz  
**Office Hours:** by appointment only

**Lecturer:** Ken Perszyk  
**Room:** Murphy Building, MY718  
**Phone:** 4637410  
**Email:** ken.perszyk@vuw.ac.nz  
**Office Hours:** Monday 1-3

**Lectures:** Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays 12-12:50  
**Venue:** Hugh McKenzie LT206; HMLT206

**Additional Information:** Any additional information or notices about this course will be posted on blackboard.

**Tutors:** Tony Scott, Matt Gers, Alice Munro, Kim Shaw-Williams, and Alan Poole

**Tutorial Times and Venues:** as shown in S-cubed. Tutorials commence in the **second** week of the course

**PHIL105 will use S-Cubed for tutorial registration.**

Use your internet browser to go to: <https://signups.vuw.ac.nz>.

Use your normal **student login** and **password** to sign into S-Cubed.

Click on "**PHIL105**" You will see info about your course and about the different tutorial sessions.

Sign up to your preferred session by clicking on the "**sign up**" button.

Please note: This sign-up programme is only available from **Monday 9 July to Friday 13 July 2007**.

If you do not sign up during this time, you may be extremely limited in your choice of tutorial time.

If you have any problems, check the handout you were given about S-cubed. If you still have problems please see the Philosophy Programme Administrator, Murphy Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, MY518.

**Attendance at tutorials is not compulsory, but is strongly recommended.**

**COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

PHIL 105 aims to provide an introduction to some central problems in philosophy. The student who passes this course will have acquired an adequate understanding of, and ability to evaluate, arguments and issues from several areas of philosophy. The course should provide a solid foundation for further work in the discipline, and also help students think more carefully and critically about a wide range of issues.

**COURSE CONTENT:**

**Section One** (David Eng): The Mind/Body Problem (Weeks 1 and 2)

That we are conscious beings is perhaps the most immediate and obvious fact about ourselves. What is it that makes us conscious? Is there likely to be a complete scientific, materialistic explanation of the phenomenon, or does our consciousness show that we are not fully physical beings?

**Section Two** (Stuart Brock): Free Will and Responsibility (Weeks 3 and 4)

Do human beings have free will? If we are not free, could we be morally responsible for any of our actions? Could we have free will in a deterministic universe?

**Section Three** (David Eng): Personal Identity (Weeks 5 and 6)

Each of us changes over time. Those changes are often radical. Nevertheless, we all think of our past and future selves as us. But what makes you *you*: what makes you the same person now, ten years ago, or twenty years on?

**Section Four** (Nick Agar): The philosophy of Artificial Intelligence (Weeks 7 and 8)

Is the machine you will use to write your essay capable of thought? If it isn't capable, might a later model with improved hardware and better software? This section examines arguments for and against the idea of thinking machines.

**Section Five** (Ken Perszyk): Death and the Meaning of Life (Weeks 9 and 10)

Is it bad to die? Does life have a meaning? What, if anything, would make a life meaningful?

**Section Six** (Ken Perszyk): Time Travel (Weeks 11 and 12)

Is time travel logically possible? Or does it give rise to paradoxes and unsolvable puzzles?

### ESSENTIAL READINGS:

The readings for this course are available in the 'Course Readings' section of the "Blackboard" module for PHIL 105.

### ASSESSMENT:

The assessment for PHIL 105 will be based on:

- (a) **In-Class test** worth **15%** of total course marks. This will be sat **Monday 6 August 2007** during lecture time (12:00-12:50). Note that this is the only time the test can be sat. If you are unable to sit the test you should contact Nick Agar as soon as possible. Please provide relevant supporting documentation. Please see "Blackboard" for the questions. The date of the examination is set later in the trimester by the Registrar but will fall within the date range of **19 October to 10 November 2007**.
- (b) **Essay of approximately 2,000 words** worth **30%** of total course marks, due **4:00 pm on Friday 14 September 2007**. See the essay handout for further information.
- (c) A **closed-book, three hour**, registry-administered exam **worth 55%** of total course marks. The exam will be divided into four sections. Students will be expected to answer one question from each section. Further information about the exam will be available on "Blackboard."

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND COURSE AIMS/OBJECTIVES:

The topics for the essay, in-class test, and final examination are chosen to ensure that the subject matter in the course has been adequately covered in the depth appropriate for the 100-level, while also giving students an opportunity to focus on those arguments and issues that they find most interesting. Students should demonstrate that they understand and can evaluate arguments and issues covered in at least four sections of the course.

### SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK: SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The essay must be submitted in *two* different ways. A *paper* copy of your essay must be submitted to MY 518, and a *digital* copy of your essay must be submitted to blackboard. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. The title of your file should adhere to the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, dot, doc (for example: frodo\_baggins.doc). If you suspect you may have trouble submitting your paper in this way, be sure to see your tutor for assistance *before the due date*. The paper copy is only a backup if something goes wrong with the digital submission.

### ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS

All essays will be submitted to and evaluated by **TurnItIn.com**, an on-line plagiarism detection service, before being graded. Please refer to the information below relating to plagiarism in order to avoid any confusion as to what constitutes plagiarism.

### PENALTIES:

Late essays, without extension, will be penalised **one full letter grade per week**. Late essays will also receive no comments. An extension can be granted only with the (prior) approval of the course coordinator, Nick Agar, and only in exceptional circumstances. Procrastination is not a legitimate ground for an extension. If you have other assignments due around September 14, plan ahead. Also be aware that there may be "Blackboard", internet, and printing outages throughout the trimester. Please make sure you are aware of these various ITS outages. A schedule is posted on the following URL:

<http://intranet.vuw.ac.nz/its/serverroom-upgrade/timetable/>. Scheduled outages are also no excuse for lateness.

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 such cases prior information will be necessary. It is in your interests to contact the course coordinator as soon as a potential problem emerges – not just before a deadline. Extension forms are available in the Philosophy Programme office. If granted an extension by the course coordinator, students are required to agree to a new assessment due date.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each PHIL 105 student must:

- Submit the essay on or by the specified date (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of written work)

PLEASE NOTE that **Friday, 19 October 2007** is the **FINAL DATE** on which any written work can be accepted by the Programme, since this is the date on which we must determine whether students have met the course requirements. This means that the provision for late submission with a penalty does not apply beyond this date. Permission to submit work after 19 October 2007 must be sought in writing from the Head of Programme, Dr Cei Maslen, and will only be granted for serious medical reasons (supported by medical certificate), or in case of serious personal crisis.

**Note:** A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to satisfy a mandatory requirement for a course, will receive a K grade for that course, while a course mark less than 50% will result in the appropriate fail grade (D, E or F).

## Workload guidelines

In accordance with Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 12 hours per week to PHIL105. This includes 3 hours of lectures and a 1 hour tutorial.

## AEGROTATS

Please note that under the revised Examination Statute (Sections 6-10) students may now apply for an aegrotat pass in respect of any item of assessment falling within the last three weeks before the day on which lectures cease. In the case of second trimester courses in 2007 the starting point for this period is **Monday, 24 September 2007**.

The following rules apply:

- Where a student is not able to sit a test falling within these last three weeks because of illness or injury etc., an alternative test will be arranged where possible. If the student has completed in the view of the course-supervisor, sufficient marked assessment relevant to the objectives of the course, an average mark may be offered.
- Where a student has an essay or other piece of assessment due in the last three weeks, and has a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation, the student will be given an extension.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*Plagiarism is 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. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff,

information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

***Plagiarism is not worth the risk.***

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct ([www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html).

## **GENERAL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **General University policies and statutes**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at [www.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.vuw.ac.nz).

### **Student and staff conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct)

### **Academic grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances)

### **Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)**

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building; telephone: 463-6070, email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz). The Disability Liaison Person for the Philosophy Programme is Sophia Zhao, tel. 463 5368 or email [sophia.zhao@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sophia.zhao@vuw.ac.nz)

### **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you

concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407 and Dr Stuart Brock, Murphy Building, room 312**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/)

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz)) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

### **Manaaki Pihipihinga Maori and Pacific Mentoring programme**

1. Academic mentoring for all Maori & Pacific students at all levels of under graduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses

2. Post graduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities

3. Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact: Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842

We are located at: 14 Kelburn Parade back court yard Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Maori Studies mentoring is done at the marae. Pop in and see us to register with the programme (and use our study spaces and computer suites and free cups of tea and coffee while you study)