



School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations

Philosophy Programme

First Trimester, 2008

PHIL 104 (CRN 1003) ARGUMENT AND ANALYSIS

Course Outline

Philosophy Programme: The Programme's office is located in Murphy Bldg. 518 (abbreviated as MY), and the direct phone number is (04) 463-5368.

The Cast: The lectures are given by five staff members. The names, room and telephone extension numbers, and office hours of the lecturers are listed below:

Stuart Brock	MY 701	x6970	by appt.
Ramon Das*	MY 608	x5038	Th. 1-3
Ben Jeffares	MY 702	x8508	by appt.
Kim Sterelny	MY 719	x8642	W 10-12
John Matthewson	tba	tba	by appt.

* Course Co-ordinator

The course tutors are: Nik Parkin, Alan Poole, Rhydian Thomas, and Dan Turton.

Lectures: Lectures are held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays in Kirk 303 (KK LT 303) from 12:00-12:50..

Tutorials: The University is introducing an online facility to sign up for tutorials. More information will be given in lectures during the first week. Tutorials commence in the **second** week of the course. Attendance at tutorials is not compulsory, but is strongly recommended.

Text: The first volume of *Philosophy 104 Coursebook 2008* is available for purchase from the University's Class Notes Shop in the Student Union Building. This covers readings for the first six weeks of lectures. Readings for the final 6 weeks will be available later.

Aims and Objectives: The main aim is to provide an introduction to philosophy, with special attention given to the nature and analysis of argumentation. The student who passes this course will have acquired an adequate understanding of, and ability to evaluate, some arguments

(issues) discussed in 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 wider range of issues.

Course Outline: The course is divided into five sections.

Section One (Stuart Brock): 9 lectures (25 Feb – 14 March)

In this part of the course we will be examining the traditional arguments for and against the existence of God.

Section Two. (Ramon Das): 6 lectures (17 March – 4 April)

In this section we address some questions in the foundations of morality, including moral relativism. We'll also ask why one should be moral.

Section Three (Kim Sterelny): 6 lectures (7 April – 2 May)

This section addresses some traditional and contemporary accounts of knowledge and scepticism.

Section Four (John Matthewson): 6 lectures (5 May – 16 May)

This section covers some basic issues in the philosophy of science. We'll examine the distinction between science and pseudo-science, some criticisms of the authority of science, and the sociology of scientific knowledge.

Section Five (Ben Jeffares): 6 lectures (19 May – 30 May)

This section introduce students to some philosophical issues arising out of contemporary debates in evolutionary psychology and socio-biology.

Mandatory Course Requirements:

None.

Assessment: PHIL 104 is assessed on the basis of one in-class test, one essay, and the final examination.

The **in-class test** will be held during the lecture time on **Friday 28 March**. The test will consist of one essay question:

Consider the following passage from Dostoevsky's 'Rebellion' Book V, Chapter 4 of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

This poor child of five was subjected to every possible torture by those cultivated parents. They beat her, thrashed her, kicked her for no reason till her body was one bruise. Then, they went to greater refinements of cruelty -- shut her up all night in the cold and frost in a privy, and because she didn't ask to be taken up at night (as though a child of five sleeping its angelic, sound sleep could be trained to wake and ask), they smeared her face and filled her mouth with excrement, and it was her mother, her mother did this. And that mother could sleep, hearing the poor child's groans! Can you understand why a little creature, who can't even understand what's done to her, should beat her little aching heart with her tiny fist in the dark and the cold, and weep her meek unresentful tears to dear, kind God to protect her? Do you understand that, friend and brother, you pious and humble novice? Do you understand why this infamy must be and is permitted?

Without it, I am told, man could not have existed on earth, for he could not have known good and evil. Why should he know that diabolical good and evil when it costs so much? Why, the whole world of knowledge is not worth that child's prayer to dear, kind God!

Dostoevsky is evaluating a common objection to a premise in the argument from evil. Your job in this test is to do the following four things: (1) outline, in standard form, the argument from evil; (2) tell me which premise in the argument the hypothetical objector is challenging and explain the objection; (3) explain and elaborate Dostoevsky's response to the objection (i.e., explain why Dostoevsky thinks the objection is misguided); (4) consider and evaluate an alternative and different objection to the same premise in the argument from evil.

Reading: See Section I of the *PHIL 104 Coursebook*.

The **essay**, of approximately 2,000 words, is due by **4:00 pm on Friday 2 May**. The essay question is as follows:

Explain and evaluate the doctrine of moral relativism. Make sure that you discuss Harman's arguments in favour of relativism and *at least one* other critic's arguments. (Rachels, Shafer-Landau, Thomson or Nagel).

Late essays, without extension, will be penalised ten marks per week. No essays will be accepted after 16 May. An extension can be granted only with the (prior) approval of the course co-ordinator, and only in **exceptional** circumstances. Procrastination is not a legitimate ground for an extension. If you have other assignments due around the same time, plan ahead.

You must submit your essay electronically via *Blackboard* (please consult *Blackboard* for instructions). **This electronic version will be sent to turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism website, and is the version that will be graded.** (Additional information regarding the use of Turnitin will be given on the essay topic handout.) However, as a back-up **you must also submit a hard copy of your essay to the Philosophy Programme office (MY 518).**

The **final examination** is a closed-book, three-hour examination. The examination paper will be divided into five sections, one for each section of the course. Students must answer four questions, no two of which may be from the same section. All questions will have equal marks value. A short handout confirming arrangements for the final exam will be posted on *Blackboard* in May.

Relation Between Assessment and Course Aims/Objectives: The topics for the in-class tests, essay, 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 (issues) covered in at least four sections of the course.

Assessment:

The final grade is determined as follows:

In-class tests: 15% each
Essay: 35%

Final exam 50%

Workload:

There will be four contact hours a week - three of lectures and one of tutorial. Independent working hours should average at eight hours a week.

A copy of this course information outline, the tutorial programme, overheads used in lectures, and any additional course information will be posted on *Blackboard*.

Aegrotats

Please note that under the Assessment Statute (Sections 4.5) 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 **first trimester** courses in 2008 the starting point for this period is **Monday 12 May 2008**.

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.
- if none of the above is available to the student, e.g., if she/he has an ongoing illness, than an aegrotat will be considered. See Assessment Statute (Sections 4.5) for a full explanation of the rules governing the provision of aegrotats in these circumstances.

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. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were ones own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct. All cases will be recorded on a central database and severe

penalties may be imposed. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

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

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

The University requires that certain information be communicated to students, either in the course outline or electronically (ref. Assessment Handbook 3.3). The current version of this information (adapted for FHSS courses) is below, and has also been saved as a separate document in the Common Folder (M:\Common\Course Administration\Course Outlines). This may be appended to your course outline without alteration.

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 hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support