



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 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 14 July to 16 November 2014

Teaching dates: 14 July to 17 October 2014

Mid-trimester break: 25 August to 7 September 2014

Study week: 20–24 October 2014

Examination/Assessment Period: 24 October to 15 November 2014

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

Lectures: Monday, Wednesday, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm
Venue: HMLT 103 (Monday), AMLT 105 (Wednesday)

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 Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:00 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 course 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)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. integrate disciplinary knowledge and skills developed at 200-level in the field of ontology and metaphysics
2. articulate original and useful philosophical theses and provide original arguments in support of contentious philosophical theses
3. engage in original and ethical research in philosophy under close supervision

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

This course has been designed on the assumption that students will devote approximately 200 hours to it throughout the trimester. This is an average of 14 hours per week across the 14 weeks of trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures, completion of all set weekly readings and research and writing for set assessment tasks.

Essays and other written assignments may require enough time for location, retrieval and reading of a range of sources. Note-taking, planning, drafting and editing the draft will all be necessary before writing up a final version.

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Essay (3,000 words)	30%	1, 2, 3	19 September
2	Essay (3,000 words)	30%	1, 2, 3	17 October
3	Three hour examination	40%	1, 2	tba

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.

Marking criteria

See attached

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.

Submission and return of work

All final essays are to be submitted digitally in Blackboard.

Directions for submission via Blackboard:

- a) click on the 'Assignments' icon in the course menu (to the left of the page).
- b) select 'View/Complete Assignment' for the relevant assignment.
- c) click the 'Browse' icon, and then select your essay.
- d) 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.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Extensions can be granted only with the prior approval of the course coordinator, and only in exceptional circumstances. Having lots of other assignments due around the same time is no excuse; plan ahead. If granted an extension, students must agree to a new due date. Contact the Course Coordinator as soon as a problem emerges.

Penalties

Late submission of research essays and proposals will **not be accepted** unless the student makes an appointment as soon as practically possible with the course coordinator to explain the lateness (ideally before the deadline for submission of the assessment task). The circumstances under which an extension will be considered are outlined in section 3.2.1 of the Assessment Handbook. (see: www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf).

Set texts

Phil 307 Book of Readings available from Vicbooks.
See www.vicbooks.co.nz for details on buying Books of Readings.

Recommended reading

See separate handout entitled 'Reading List'.

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

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/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