SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC SESSION 2016-2017

PH1023 EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND REALITY

15 CREDITS, 11 WEEKS

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

Dr. Beth Lord
Old Brewery room G12
01224 272367
s.b.lord@abdn.ac.uk
Office hour: see MyAberdeen

Discipline Administration:

Mrs Lisa Evans
50-52 College Bounds
Room CB001
01224 273986
philosophy@abdn.ac.uk
TIMETABLE
Students will attend two one-hour lectures and one one-hour tutorial per week. Lectures begin in week 1. Tutorials begin in week 2.

Students can view their university timetable at
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php

COURSE DESCRIPTION
How does the human mind relate to the world? This course introduces two major systems of thought from the history of philosophy that take different approaches to answering this question. Students will first learn about 17th century rationalism by focusing on Rene Descartes’ Meditations on First Philosophy. Through reading this text, students will learn about Descartes’ rationalist approach to knowledge and reality, including his method of doubt, his doctrine of the separation of mind and body, and his argument for the existence of God. We will then turn to David Hume’s Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding as a key text of 18th century empiricism. Students will learn how Hume criticized rationalism and turned to experience to provide a foundation for knowledge. We will look at Hume’s distinction between impressions and ideas, the problem of induction, his account of causality, and his critique of miracles. Throughout the course we will critically compare and examine Descartes’ and Hume’s texts and arguments by drawing on their readers and critics.

In this first-year core philosophy course we also focus on developing the skills of reading philosophical texts and writing philosophy essays.

COURSE AIMS
• To introduce key philosophical questions about experience, knowledge, and reality
To introduce students to the texts and arguments of historical and/or contemporary rationalist and empiricist philosophers

To develop students’ skills of reading and engaging critically with primary texts

To develop students’ skills of reasoning, argumentation, and debate

To develop students’ philosophical essay writing skills

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Students will have acquired knowledge of central topics in historical and/or contemporary variants of rationalism and empiricism and of key philosophical questions about experience, knowledge, and reality
- Students will understand the main ideas of the philosophers studied, and will be able to explain the major differences between their philosophies
- Students will have critically engaged with primary texts
- Students will have articulated the results of their learning clearly and systematically in written form and discussion

**LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME**

The table below indicates the topics and readings to be covered each week. Full details of the texts are listed under “Texts to buy” below. A detailed course timetable will be provided on MyAberdeen.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Descartes: Preface</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Being doubtful</td>
<td>Descartes: First Meditation and selected Objections and Replies</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Thinking and the existence of the mind</td>
<td>Descartes: Second Meditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thinking and the existence of God</td>
<td>Descartes: Third Meditation and selected Objections and Replies</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Thinking truly and erroneously; thinking about material things</td>
<td>Descartes: Fourth and Fifth Meditations</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thinking and the existence of material things</td>
<td>Descartes: Sixth Meditation, and selections from the Correspondence with Princess Elisabeth</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Empiricism, rationalism, and superstition</td>
<td>Hume: Sections I and X</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Sensing, representing, and associating</td>
<td>Hume: Sections II, III, and IV(i)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Inferring, following custom, and forming beliefs</td>
<td>Hume: Sections IV(ii) and V</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Imagining and falling prey to scepticism</td>
<td>Hume: Sections VII and XII</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Philosophy and common sense</td>
<td>Selections from Thomas Reid</td>
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**TEXTS TO BUY**

Students are expected to have done the week’s required reading in advance and to bring the text to every tutorial. **You should therefore buy your own copies of the two main course texts.** Please buy these editions so we all follow the same pagination.

Blackwell’s bookshop on campus sells these two texts as a “bundle”, which will save you money. They will also price-match if you find comparable books listed cheaper elsewhere.

SECONDARY READING
A list of suggested secondary reading will be provided on MyAberdeen. Students may find it helpful to get one or both of the following introductory guides. These are designed to be read alongside the main course texts listed above (they are not a replacement for reading the main texts!):


For the writing skills component of the course, you may wish to buy:


ASSESSMENT
First attempt: Two 1500 word essays (50% each)
Resit: One 1500 word essay (100%)

In addition, students will be required to complete non-assessed formative assignments for tutorials.

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to MyAberdeen- Organisations- Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.
ESSAYS
Essay topics will be provided on MyAberdeen.

Essays should be approximately 1500 words long and must be double-spaced. The word count includes footnotes but excludes bibliography. Students will be penalised for essays that are too short or too long by 20% or more.

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES
Essay 1 deadline: Tuesday 18 October (week 6), 3:00 PM
Essay 2 deadline: Tuesday 29 November (week 12), 3:00 PM

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

When uploading assignments, please do the following:

Submit by the due date, no hard copy will be required unless directly requested by the Course Coordinator through My Aberdeen.

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student ID number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 PHxxxx Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. 59999999 PHxxxx Essay 1.

If you have been granted an extension, please upload the completed Extension Form (signed by yourself and course coordinator) along with your submission.

When you submit your work please also tick the ‘Mark Reviewed’ Box.

Please note: Failure to submit by the due date (unless a prior arrangement has been made) will result in a deduction of marks. Where no submission is received, this will result in a mark of zero.

Please note: During 2016/2017 the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy has agreed to take part in a pilot. This means for level 1 submissions SafeAssign text matching software will be used, other levels we will continue to use TurnitinUK. Other schools will also continue to use TurnitinUK.