PHIL 101 – Introduction to Philosophy
Summer 2019 Term 1 (UBC)
Instructor: Matthew Smithdeal

About the Course:
Philosophers strive for precision and clarity in thought and expression. Philosophical discussions are often abstract, but how we answer philosophical questions shapes how we live our lives, and how we interact with others and with the world we find ourselves in. On the other hand, arguments have emerged from a wide array of disciplines, often accompanied by a growing amount of empirical evidence, which suggest that perhaps this model has things backwards. Possibly, rather than the answers we give to philosophical questions shaping our lives, our lives and our experiences and our past social interactions shape the answers that we give to philosophical questions.

This course aims to introduce students to both sides of the debate (or rather, both sides of many, many intertangled debates). Loosely, we will examine five core issues or questions that arise frequently in philosophy:

1. Who are we?
2. What kinds of creatures are we?
3. How do we acquire scientific knowledge and what is scientific knowledge?
4. How do we acquire knowledge of *anything?*
5. What even is knowledge and what does it mean to say we know something?

For each of these questions and topics, we will examine at least one core position, philosopher, and/or debate within the mainstream tradition of Western philosophy. We will also examine at least one core position, philosopher, and/or debate from outside the mainstream, Western tradition. The latter will often draw on feminist philosophical traditions and/or non-Western, English speaking philosophical traditions.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, you will have:
- Engaged critically with a text
- Seen both mainstream, Western, and non-traditional, feminist takes on core issues/questions within philosophy
- Developed the ability to construct an argument and defend a thesis
- Grasped philosophical concepts
- Done philosophy!

Assessment:
All essays shall be submitted in paper form in class and uploaded to Turnitin
Every student will be required to complete the following:
- **Attend and participate** in all classes (20% of final grade)
    - Philosophy is an activity and we will be doing philosophy in class. You will be expected to participate in the in-class activity of doing philosophy.
- **Read** the assigned readings *before class* (10% of final grade)
    - Each class will have a brief reading quiz administered via Tophat. This quiz will also serve as attendance. It will be administered at various times throughout each class depending on the suitability of timing.
    - Starts second week.
- **Write and revise one individual essay** (30% of final grade in total)
    - The ability to write essays is a foundational skill for philosophers (and many other academics). Philosophical writing, though, is a little bit peculiar in its own way. Throughout this course, we'll spend some time working on and developing your writing abilities.

- Each student will submit one individually written essay focusing on one of the five topics of the course (10% of final grade) ***Due May 29th, start of class (online and paper)***
- Each student will then be assigned a group to workshop their essays in class (5% of final grade) ***In-class June 10th or 12th***
- Each student will then submit a revised, slightly longer and more involved individually written essay (15% of final grade) ***Due June 17th, start of class (online and paper)***

- **Complete a final project with a written and oral component**
  (40% of final grade in total – 20% from oral component and 20% from written component)
  - Each student will have the option of completing one of the following three options:
    1. Longer, more involved, and further revised *single author essay* and 10-15-minute *one-on-one oral exam* defending the final essay
    2. Longer, more involved, and further revised *group authored essay* and 15-20-minute *group presentation* on final essay
    3. Group authored *philosophical dialogue or script* and 10-15-minute *performance* (acting out of dialogue, video/live performance of script, podcast, etc)
  - Students will be required to submit their final project choice after submission of the revised, single authored essay ***(Note: there is no "default" option – you must inform me of your intentions or I will assume you intend to not submit a final project)***
  - Each student/group will also be required to meet individually with me to discuss their plans/role distributions, etc – timing to be determined based on interest in each option
  - Group presentations/performances will be scheduled during the final exam time. Depending on how many students take each option, one-on-one exams may be scheduled during the final exam time slot as well or during finals week ideally (TBD)

Course Readings:
All readings will be made available via canvas and the library reserve system. *There is no textbook that you need to buy for this course!*
Please let me know as soon as possible if you have any issues accessing or finding the material.

Tentative Schedule
Please note that this schedule may change at the instructor's discretion to suit the pace of the course and the interests of the students. Please also note that all readings are to be read ***before*** *the date listed.*

Week 1
Monday, May 6th **Introducing philosophy and arguments** (no readings)
Set up personal identity topic

Wednesday, May 8th **Personal Identity**
Parfit, *The Self and the Future*

Week 2
Monday, May 13th **Personal Identity**
Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex*

Wednesday, May 15th **Natural and Social Kinds**

Haslanger, *Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?*

Week 3
Wednesday, May 22nd **Natural and Social Kinds**
Haslanger continued

Week 4	**Scientific Inquiry**
Wednesday, May 29th	**Paper Due**
	Dupre, *Natural Kinds and Biological Taxa*
Week 5	**Skepticism and Deeper Worries (Paper writing workshop this week)**
Monday, June 10th	Hacking, *Madness: Biological or Constructed?*
Wednesday, June 12th	Berkeley, Pages from *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*
	Hume, Pages from *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
Week 6	**Knowledge and Objectivity**
Monday, June 17th	Harding, *Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity?"*
	Optional: Kitcher, "Well Ordered Science" from *Science, Truth, and Democracy*
	***Optional*:** Code, *Public Knowledge, Public Trust: Towards Democratic Epistemic Practice*
Wednesday, June 19th	Atleo, Prologue and Introduction to *Tsawalk: a Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*
	Gettier, *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?*
	Revised Paper Due