

COURSE OUTLINE  
**PHIL 301 PHILOSOPHICAL FUNDAMENTALS**  
Winter term 2020: TTH 10:00-11:30

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Office Hours: Thursday, 12:00-14:00

This course is required of, and open only to, students who have begun an undergraduate Honours degree in philosophy, and who have completed Philosophy 210 or the equivalent. Philosophical Fundamentals is a 'skills' course. The primary aims are to ensure that you can read and charitably reconstruct an argument in a text, and that you can present an argument and critically evaluate it, both in conversation and in writing.

The course will address four related themes in political philosophy: friendship, justice, equality and autonomy. We will approach these themes historically and through contemporary readings. The topics are all such that they can be considered in both personal and political terms, and so we will discuss the relation between personal relationships and political relationships. For example, we will ask whether friendship is possible between people who are not equals, whether justice is friendship on a political scale, and whether equality presupposes autonomy.

Among the philosophers we will be reading are: Plato, Aristotle, Michel de Montaigne, Gabriel Suchon, Étienne de la Boétie, Richard Arneson, Jeremy Waldron, and Natalie Stoljar.

**This is not a lecture course. Students should be aware that they will be responsible in every class for much of the discussion.**

**REQUIRED READING:** required readings will be posted on the MyCourses page for the course. Students should expect to read 30-50 pages a week, and should come to class prepared to discuss the reading assigned for each week.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** participation in class discussions (10%), 10 weekly discussion questions to be posted on MyCourses (20%), an oral presentation (10%), a write-up of the presentation incorporating points raised in discussion (25%); a final paper (35%). You will be required to submit for approval the question the final paper will address, and how you propose to proceed to answer it, prior to final submission.

Policy on extensions:

No extensions will be granted without an appropriate medical note. Late work will be penalized at the rate of a third of a grade per calendar day past the due date. For example, an assignment that is evaluated as a B, if one day late, will be assigned a grade of B-; the same paper, if two days late, would receive a C+.

Required syllabus statements:

McGill University values academic integrity. All students must, therefore, understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.