

# PHIL 201: Introduction to Philosophy

Winter 2014

Professor Emily Carson  
Leacock 936

[Emily.carson@mcgill.ca](mailto:Emily.carson@mcgill.ca)

Office hours: TTh 12-1

Teaching assistants: Alice Everly  
Joseph van Weelden

The aim of this course is not to present a body of knowledge called ‘philosophy’, but to introduce students to philosophical ways of thinking. We will do this by reflecting on a wide range of concepts and beliefs that we tend to take for granted in their ordinary use. We will begin with the related concepts of freedom, moral responsibility, and punishment. We will move on to questions about the nature of the mind and our knowledge of the world. Finally, we will reflect on the nature of beauty, science and mathematics.

## Assessment

The work for the course includes (a) an electronic journal (15% of the final grade); (b) a short paper (1000 words) (25% of the final grade); (c) a short paper (1500 words) on an assigned topic (30% of the final grade); and (d) a final exam (30% of the final grade).

(a) *Electronic journal*: The journal is made up of ten weekly entries of approximately 250 words each, addressing the class readings from weeks 2 through 14. The goal of each entry is to say what the central view of the reading is: what idea is the author defending, and what reason or evidence does the author adduce in support of that view? Each entry is to be submitted by email to a gmail address for your TA by 9am on the Monday of the lecture dealing with the reading. The first entry is due on January 13. If the entry is submitted *on time*, is roughly the right length, and discusses the appropriate reading coherently, you get 1.5% of the final grade.

(b) *First paper*: You will write a 1000-word paper expanding on the journal entry from week 2, 3 or 4. The paper will be due on February 4.

(c) *Second paper*: You will write a paper of about 1500 words in stages during the semester. The task will include a peer-review process involving a web-based system called SWORD (Scaffolded Writing and Reviewing in the Disciplines). Further details about the paper will be provided later in the semester via myCourses. The first draft will be due on February 28.

(d) *Final exam*: There will be a formal final exam during the exam period.

**Extensions:** Special arrangements will be made *only* in the event of illness (with a doctor’s note), death in the family, or something of equal seriousness. **Note: only the lecturer can grant an extension; please do not ask the TAs.**