

# PHIL 1200: Intro to Philosophy, Fall 2020 (Plague Version)

## **Instructor:**

Dr. RJ Leland (call me 'RJ')

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This course is a sampler on selected topics in philosophy. It's meant to give you a taste for what philosophical thinking looks and feels like (hint: you probably already do it, but you can also do it better). And to give you a basic skillset you might bring to bear in more advanced philosophy classes. And to give you initial familiarity with the way philosophy is done in most anglophone philosophy departments. And as an advertisement for the study of philosophy. The hope is that you find the approach and issues interesting, and can thereby seek out more courses that you might be interested in.

After an introductory section, we'll focus on three (related) topics in Fall Semester: (1) ethics, (2) the mind/body problem, (3) agency and responsibility.

## **Class format**

1 **video lecture**/week, which I'll typically split into two or more chunks for easier digestion. Pre-recorded, generally available on UM Learn by Friday night.

1 **class discussion**=  $\leq 40$  ppl on zoom for 50 minutes. Students will be assigned to either Wednesday or Friday's class discussion (1130-1220). If you have a reason for preferring one or the other, we'll flex you. Just drop me an email. By the time you attend the discussion you should have done the reading and lecture watching for the week. You should also have completed the quiz, which will test your familiarity with the lecture and reading. Quizzes are timed and are open book/note.

Open **office hours** on Monday 1130-1230. These office hours are drop in on zoom. Everyone is encouraged to show up to talk about whatever. We will discuss topics from the course. If you have something personalized (advice on an assignment, etc.) that's fine to bring up, too. If it needs to be private, email me and we'll set up an appointment to chat by phone or Zoom.

## Assessment

**Weekly Quizzes** to assess reading/lecture comprehension (15%)

**Weekly response writings** (20%, graded pass/fail solely for good faith completion): To get full credit for the week, you must make one post (15%) and one comment (5%) on another person's post for each week. More posts are welcome but not required. I will provide prompts which you can respond to in your posts, though you're also free to post on a question of your choosing (provided it connects to the weeks reading/lecture). Your post must be made by Tuesday at 5 pm, your comment must be made by Wednesday before 10 AM.

### Tests

Midterm Exam (30%); End-of-term Exam (35%)

**Participation In Class Discussion** can help your grade, but the absence of participation won't hurt you. **I may cold call students**, but you're always free to pass.

**Schedule Posted on UM Learn. There is no textbook for this course (readings will be posted)**

## Technology Policy

You may not record the class without permission.

Please avoid multitasking during class time: don't check your email or perform unrelated tasks with your Zoom on mute.

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism<sup>1</sup>

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, ("Personation at Examinations" (Section 5.2.9) and "Plagiarism and Cheating" (Section 8.1)) and duplicate submission by reading documentation provided at the Arts Student Resources web site at [<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html>]. Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them.

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<sup>1</sup> Barring the first two ¶¶, the text for this section of my syllabus is copied from Chris Tillman's Introduction to Metaphysics syllabus.

Plagiarism occurs when someone uses an article, book, or website, or other source of ideas in his/her work without citing the source in a footnote. Plagiarism is a form of cheating because the plagiarist takes the writing of another and treats it as his/her own. The work of another is stolen. Plagiarism is a serious offense.

To avoid being prosecuted for plagiarism you should be sure that you include a footnote whenever you rely on someone else's work. If you are quoting (using someone else's words) you must indicate that the prose is a quotation either by the use of quotation marks, or (for long quotations) by offsetting the quotation from the rest of your text. Each quotation must be followed by a footnote. If you are paraphrasing (i.e., summarizing someone else's text in your own words) the paraphrase must be followed by a footnote. If you do not know how to construct footnotes, you should ask your professor for instructions before you turn in any assignments. There are different forms of acceptable citation. Your professor will indicate which method he/she prefers. Be sure to cite the source on which you relied accurately. If you use a website, you must include the correct URL.

If you are suspected of plagiarism, a disciplinary hearing will be conducted by the Philosophy Department. If it is determined that you plagiarized, you will get an F for the assignment, and (in most cases) an F for the course. A note may also be included on your transcript to indicate that the F resulted from plagiarism. If you are suspected a second time, the hearing will be conducted by the Dean's Office and you may be suspended from University. Additionally, some forms of plagiarism constitute criminal acts under Canadian law.

Here are some common excuses for plagiarism which will not reduce your penalty.

- I forgot to cite the source.
- I was in a rush and left out the footnotes.
- I did not understand how to construct footnotes.
- I wasn't able to do the assignment.

If you are rushed for time, make sure above all else that you don't plagiarize. A grade of C on a rough but unplagiarized paper is better for you than an F on the course, together with the possibility of disciplinary action from the University administration. If you have any questions about when citation is required or about how to cite, be sure to ask me.

Academic dishonesty on the exam will be taken similarly seriously. The risk:reward ratio makes cheating really not worth it, making academic dishonesty both immoral and imprudent. Please don't do it.

## Accessibility and Resources

I care about your well-being and success in this course. Consider this an invitation to discuss your learning styles and comprehension requirements with me. If you don't like something you're seeing, check in with me about it, and I may be able to help.

Sometimes problems arise for students during a course. I get this. It's always best to talk to me if you've got special issues that might interfere with your completion of the course, or if you think there's something I could be doing differently to help you learn. Try to talk to me in advance, rather than once the problem is already critical.

I strongly encourage students with disabilities to avail themselves of the services provided by Student Accessibility Services (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/>). They can arrange for you to receive accommodation or access to resources or services you may need. If you know in advance that you'll need special accommodation during this course, you need to email me or talk to me within before the registration deadline.

The Academic Learning Centre is located in 201 Tier Building (<http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/index.html>, telephone: 204-480-1481). Advisors provide a wide range of services focused on improvement of academic learning skills. You can get individual consultations with a learning specialist (e.g. on test-taking, time management, or learning strategies). They have writing tutors to work with you on writing assignments. The Centre also offers workshops on test-taking, note-taking, essay and term paper writing, and listening skills. These services are all free to U of M students, and some services are available online.

Note that there are a host of other resources available on campus to help you if you're struggling with mental or physical health problems:

- For 24/7 mental health support, contact the Mobile Crisis Service at 204-940-1781.
- Contact the Student Counselling Centre if you are concerned about any aspect of your mental health, including anxiety, stress, or depression, or for help with relationships or other life concerns. SCC offers crisis services as well as individual, couples, and group counselling. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/index.html>
- Contact the Student Support Case Management team if you are concerned about yourself or another student and don't know where to turn. SSCM helps connect students with on and off campus resources, provides safety planning, and offers other supports, including consultation, educational workshops, and referral to the STATIS threat assessment team. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/case-manager/index.html>

- Contact University Health Service for any medical concerns, including mental health problems. UHS offers a full range of medical services to students, including psychiatric consultation.

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/health/>

- Contact the Health and Wellness Educator if you are interested in information on a broad range of health topics, including physical and mental health concerns, alcohol and substance use harms, and sexual assault. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/health-wellness/welcome.html>

- For comprehensive information about the full range of health and wellness resources available on campus, visit the Live Well @ UofM site: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/livewell/index.htm>