

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy II**  
**Course Outline**

**Instructor:** Doug Al-Maini

**Office:** NH 717

**Office Hours:** see online schedule: <http://people.stfx.ca/dalmaini/Al-Maini/scheduleDA.htm>

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**PLEASE NOTE: LAPTOP COMPUTERS AND TEXTING ARE NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS.**

**Course Description:**

A continuation of the first semester's introduction to the field of philosophy. We shall examine classic texts from the modern period forward that draw together deep insights into recurring philosophical topics such as human nature, metaphysics, knowledge, logic, value, art, ethics, and politics. The course aims to continue the work done at familiarizing students with logical ways of thinking, appreciating the value of philosophical enquiry in their own lives, and providing a basic understanding of some fundamental philosophical questions (and answers). Most of our texts were chosen in order to emphasize the on-going nature of the philosophical project: philosophy is a grand discussion about all aspects of reality that you are invited to join in. All of the texts used in this course have an ability to marry literary distinctiveness with profundity, and we shall investigate how both of these aspects work together.

**Assignments:**

Students will be required to complete four quizzes, two short essays responding to the ideas presented in the texts and a final exam. The quizzes will be worth 20% of the semester's final grade, each response will be worth 25% of the semester's final grade. The final exam will be worth 30%.

The short essay will consist in an answer to the question provided below. We shall be looking for slightly longer analyses than in the first semester, and each response should be no less than 1500 words in length. Any shorter and your response will seem superficial; any longer and I might question the conciseness of your response.

**Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1 Jan 7	Epistemology, Certainty	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 1-2
2 Jan 14	Dualism	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 3-4
3 Jan 21	Proof for God's Existence	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 5-6
4 Jan 28	Perception (1 <sup>st</sup> outline due)	Berkeley, <i>Dialogues</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> Dialogue
5 Feb 4	Idealism (2 <sup>nd</sup> outline due)	Berkeley, <i>Dialogues</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dialogue
6 Feb 11	Skepticism (1 <sup>st</sup> essay due)	Berkeley, <i>Dialogues</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dialogue
7 Feb 18	Atomism	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> (1-30)
8 Mar 4	Perception (1 <sup>st</sup> outline due)	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> (31-60)
9 Mar 11	Possible Worlds (2 <sup>nd</sup> outline due)	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> (61-90)
10 Mar 18	Modern Politics (2 <sup>nd</sup> essay due)	Kant, <i>Cosmopolitanism</i>
11 Mar 25	Alienated Labour	Marx, <i>Economic Manuscripts of 1844</i>
12 Apr 1	Pragmatism	Pierce, <i>How to Make Our Ideas Clear</i>

**Short Assignments:**

**#1: due Feb 11<sup>th</sup> (1st Outline due Jan 28<sup>th</sup>; 2<sup>nd</sup> Outline due Feb 4<sup>th</sup>)**

In the *Meditations*, Descartes uses the example of a wax block to support his position of not trusting the senses. Provide your best argument against Descartes' use of the wax block, showing that the senses may be trusted. In

this assignment you must provide an explanation of how Descartes' argument works and what he is trying to accomplish with it. Some referencing of primary text plus an explication of the text quoted is expected in this assignment.

**#2: due Mar 18<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Outline due Mar 4<sup>th</sup>; 2<sup>nd</sup> Outline due Mar 11<sup>th</sup>)**

What would Berkeley make of Descartes' argument that uses the chiliagon? In this assignment you must provide an explanation of how Descartes' argument concerning the chiliagon works, what he is trying to accomplish with it, plus an analysis of that argument from Berkeley's perspective. Again, referencing of the two primary texts plus an explication of those references is expected.

**Technical Considerations for Written Assignments:**

- 1) All written assignments must be typed (black ink, please) and double-spaced in Times New Roman font on pages with at most 1 inch margins. No extra line spaces between paragraphs. Indent the first line of a paragraph. Printing on both sides of a sheet of paper is quite acceptable.
- 2) Please no title pages. Also no "Works Cited" or "Bibliography" pages referring to one work; do bibliographic references in a footnote if you must. Please no enormously large-fonted things like titles, names, dates, course numbers, student numbers, phone numbers, or due dates that take up half a page of space. Your title, name, and student number at the top of the first page is quite sufficient. Please visibly number any multiple-page assignments. If for some reason you must hand in the assignment to the office, please include my name at the top of the assignment as well.
- 3) No duo-tangs, folders, binders, or paperclips. Loose sheets are acceptable, but do remember to number them.
- 4) Under no circumstances will emailed assignments be accepted. Please hand in your assignments at the start of class on the day they are due.
- 5) The final page of this outline is the evaluation form that will be used in the assessment of your writing. This evaluation form provides the clearest explanation of my requirements for an essay. Please, study it carefully before you write your work.
- 6) The late policy is a deduction of 3% per day that the assignment is handed in late. This course outline lets you know when assignments are due, and you have been given plenty of time to complete them. Consequently last minute excuses for not completing assignments on time will be met with skepticism.
- 7) Many of the above requirements are arbitrary demands on my part, but they really do facilitate the assessment of your work. Please follow them.
- 8) Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. If you make use of an idea that is not of your own devising, you must cite the source of that idea. Failure to properly cite sources may result from removal from the course and expulsion from the school.

**EVALUATION FORM**  
**(Late assignments will not receive comments)**

Style:

Grammar: Are the sentences understandable? Are there any spelling mistakes? Is the diction clear and concise? Can the thought behind each sentence easily be grasped?

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Organization: Do the ideas logically follow each other, or were they haphazardly strewn together? Do the ideas flow from each other, with explicit premises deductively producing conclusions? Are the arguments connected at all, showing a chain of reasoning?

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Content:

Argument Outline: Are proper arguments (as laid out in the handout) used? Are the arguments valid? Are the arguments engaging the text? Do they convey a sense of the overall plan of the essay?

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Thesis: Does the assignment give an answer to a question or problem put forward? Is the answer more than a simple “yes” or “no”? Is the answer insightful, being an interpretive idea itself? Is the thesis explicitly stated?

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Arguments: Are there arguments presented in the paper? Are the arguments interesting or banal? Are the arguments incisive or superficial? Do the arguments explicitly outline broad premises that act as guides to understanding and reveal the unquestioned perspectives adopted in the paper?

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Originality: Does the student provide input into the conceptual debates the text engages in? Is there evidence of insight on the student’s part into the topic? Are there any new ideas being explored in the assignment? Is the student able to go beyond ideas raised in class discussion?

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Evaluation: Does the student give a fair summation of the ideas contained in the texts used? Are passages from the text cited? Does the use of these ideas meaningfully contribute to the thesis of the essay, or is the use of material a mere addendum to the main arguments of the paper?

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