

Introduction

Some sections are specifically about the *On-line* version of this course and are marked accordingly. However, the sections may also be relevant to face-to-face versions of the course since they also have a course website.

I suggest that you read through the following material, referring or following links to other material as you see fit, until you feel that you have a good idea about what is involved in this course.

If you have a document in hard copy, read it rather than the on-line version.

If you are reading a document on-line, **CLICK** on any underlined words to follow that link.

CLICK on any section title below to go to that section.

HIT the **Control-Home** key to return here, the top of the page.

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If you have questions about the course before it begins, please contact me.

By e-mail: paul.herman@ufv.ca

By telephone: 250-816-5987: not too early in the morning and not too late in the evening.

Who is the instructor?

My name is Paul Herman.

I have been teaching philosophy at University of the Fraser Valley from its early days as Fraser Valley College in 1975.

I came to FVC after a summer teaching philosophy at Carleton University in Ottawa and five years of teaching and graduate work toward my (never completed) PhD at the University of British Columbia. I did my undergraduate work at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Throughout my academic career, my primary areas of interest have been moral and political philosophy. I have focused on political justice, individual and collective decision making, and the morality of political and collective action where the interests of some people are sacrificed for the interests of a larger group, *e.g.*, as often happens in public policy and always happens in war and terrorism and often in environmental ethics and politics.

My other interests include the post-modern concept of the self as a social construction, feminist philosophy, philosophy of religion, environmental philosophy, and reasoning.

Long ago, I shifted from teaching primarily through lecture and discussion to using a lot of co-operative learning.

Consistent with my academic interests, I have often been politically active at university, in UFV committees and the Faculty and Staff Association (*e.g.*, chairing the team that negotiated its first collective agreement), and locally (*e.g.*, managing the provincial election campaign of a local candidate). And I belong to far too many Internet discussion groups.

My other interests include music, movies, fiction, and the great outdoors.

Why Study Philosophy?

Philosophy is an area of study with much practical value:

Dave Peterson, 2001 UFV Governor General's award winner for two-year program, completed the Computer Information Systems diploma program after earning a BA in Psychology: "I found that my experience in my philosophy courses really helped me with my programming. Essentially, programming is a language like English or French, with rules and structure, and it helps if you approach it that way."

1999 SFU graduate Nadine Syrjala, BA Philosophy (honours) decided to follow her heart when she realised she could apply for work experience through SFU's co-operative education program. Her analytical, research and writing skills, along with her co-op experience have already provided Syrjala with an enviable employment record with major companies and government ministries. Syrjala says, "It's just flat out wrong to think you're handicapped with a philosophy degree." (*Vancouver Sun*, 99/06/04)

See the Canadian Philosophical Association, "Philosophy? What can you do with that?" www.acpcpa.ca/en/resources.php, for how philosophy can help you with your career.

Co-operative education opportunities related to philosophy: Contact [UFV's Co-op Education Services](http://www.ufv.bc.ca/Jobs/Co-op_Ed.htm) (www.ufv.bc.ca/Jobs/Co-op_Ed.htm).

Some well-known students of philosophy (www.utm.utoronto.ca/5242.0.html):

Ed Broadbent, Patrick Buchannan, Bill Clinton, Vaclav Havel, Paul Martin, Beverly McLachlin, Pierre Trudeau

Carl Icahn (CEO, TWA Airlines), Gerald Levin (CEO, Time-Warner), Herbert Simon (Economist & Nobel Laureate), George Soros (Financier & Money Manager) Adam Zimmerman (CEO of Noranda), Moses Znaimer, (Owner CITY-TV, Much-Music)

Woody Allen, Ethan Coen, Philip K. Dick, David Duchovny, John Elway, Ken Follett, Harrison Ford, Philip Glass, Phil Jackson, Bruce Lee, Jay Leno, Ira Levin, Steve Martin, Dennis Miller, James Michener, Iris Murdoch, Bill Murray, Neil Peart, Steve Reich, Susan Sarandon, Gene Siskel, Alexander Solzhenitsin, Susan Sontag, Dave Thomas, Alex Trebek

And now, Philosophy is available as a Major at UFV.

What is this course about?

PHIL 110 introduces basic moral and political theories with an emphasis on their practical application to current issues. To warm up for the course, look for current moral and political issues of interest.

The fundamental purpose of the course is to enable you to think better for yourself when you create, evaluate, and defend solutions to moral and political problems.

For example, you might be annoyed at the the Conservatives' proposed copyright law: What do you think about rights to intellectual and artistic property such as music and movies?

Or perhaps you are worried about your parents as they approach retirement: Who do you think has an obligation to provide for our ageing population?

Should you buy cheap eggs or free-range or organic? Cheap seafood that may endanger some ecosystems or species? Clothes made by workers who are not paid decently?

The course investigates the following fundamental issues in morality and politics:

- What makes life worth living, *i.e.*, what gives value to our lives?
Is it accomplishing something such as being Prime Minister or living a long life?
Is it possessing objects such as a house or a million dollars?
Is it having experiences such as making love or living an exciting life?
Or is it having a character trait such as being wise or courageous?
- Are judgments about value and ethics objective—*i.e.*, are they true or false—or are they relative to society or to individuals?

For example, can we justify condemning people who choose to abort a foetus because it is female?

- How should we treat others, *i.e.*, what morality, if any, should govern our actions towards each other?

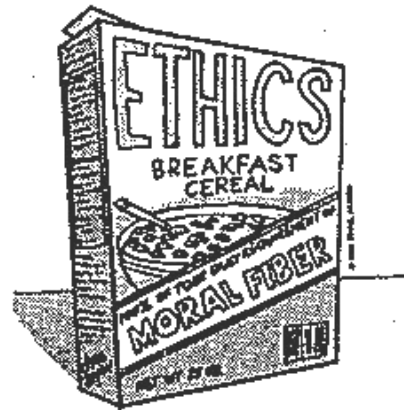
Should we really just look out for ourselves and let others do the same?

- Why do we have politics, *e.g.*, what essential functions, if any, do political institutions such as the state perform?

Do we need politics to do anything more than just keep us from assaulting each other?

At the end of this course, my intention is that you will:

- be able to describe basic positions on major issues in moral and political theory;
- communicate your organised thinking about some of these issues in order to produce and defend your own solution to specific moral and political problems;
- be motivated to use the skills and knowledge from this course as a productive way to think about moral and political issues you encounter in everyday life.



Doing philosophy requires being willing to not know exactly where you think you are going, let alone where you will end up, wandering with wonder! Although I can help you along the way, **you** must **find yourself**, where you have been, where you are, where you are going.

What instructional methods can you expect in this course?

On-line

The online version of the course is taught **entirely** on the World Wide Web in a 13-week format. **You take the course as part of a class of students following the same schedule and assignments**, in many ways similar to taking a course in a classroom setting. So, you need to follow the course schedule carefully and complete assignments by their due dates.

Using a different pedagogical medium raises questions about the nature of education and learning. Those questions then become part of the course content as you become self-conscious and reflective about the learning process.

In particular, it is impossible for the instructor an on-line course to teach each student separately. **You must teach each other with my help: you must engage in co-operative learning.**

Co-operative Learning

You are expected to work with each other to share ideas and resources, support each other, explain material and techniques to each other, and hold each other responsible for completing assignments. If you need help with a group assignment, **first** ask each other. If you need further assistance with a **group** assignment, **the group as a whole** should request help from the instructor.

Effectiveness of Co-operative Learning

There is a lot of evidence that co-operative learning is one of the most effective ways for students to learn to think with and use course material on a daily basis because it:

- enables many people to **learn actively** at the same time;
- conforms to **'the real world'** where we do much of our work in groups such as families, committees, community boards, unions; and we are often judged by the performance of the groups to which we belong. ("What's needed to push Canadians' skills," *The Vancouver Sun*, April 25, 2005 (www-927.ibm.com/ibm/cas/ACM/pressglobal.shtml#14)).
- requires students to **take responsibility for their own learning** and prepare for **life-long learning**;
- recognizes that students are often better than instructors at teaching each other, and that **the best way to learn is to teach**;
- provides a **community of support** where the skills and material in a course are valued and reinforced and students help each other, an environment essential to successful on-line learning;
- makes it possible to **pursue more diverse interests** than could the class as a whole, and to **share results** that would not be possible working only individually and competitively.

Students sometimes object that marking for group work is not always fair.

First, students are marked both on individual and on group work so that a student cannot do well by free-riding on group work alone.

Second, marking in the course is based on criteria, not competition: all those who meet the criteria for a grade receive the grade. So, you are not competing with each other for marks.

Third, I think the educational benefits are worth the occasional unfairness that may result.

Finally, it is not bad to have to deal with this common feature of our world: **you** can do something to guard against unfairness. For example, if a member does not contribute to the group's work, then do not put the person's name on group assignments.

Formats

Informal co-operative learning groups are temporary, *ad hoc* groups lasting for one or a few assignments. You engage in focused discussions between a few people.

These groups focus attention on the material, set a mood conducive to learning, help organize the material in advance, ensure that you are engaged in active learning, and provide closure to dealing with a unit of course material.

Formal co-operative learning groups last for several weeks to complete a specific, formal assignment. You are responsible for enhancing your own learning and that of your group mates.

Standard Co-operative Learning Procedures

1. The instructor gives you instructions and objectives.
2. You are assigned to a group, provided with materials, and perhaps given a specific role in the group.
3. The instructor explains the task, the co-operative structure, and relevant concepts or strategies for completing the assignment.
4. The instructor monitors your group to provide assistance as needed with academic material and co-operative techniques.
5. The instructor evaluates your results by referring to a set of non-competitive criteria, *i.e.*, everyone who meets the criteria does well.

What do you need in order to succeed in this course?

The course is suitable for any university student and does not presuppose special knowledge of philosophy.

You should read and write English competently.

You should be courteous, patient, adventurous, courageous, and self-motivated.

On-line

In order to earn credit, you must provide substantial evidence that you are attending the course. For example, you must participate in course discussion by posting questions and comments to the course bulletin board. (If you simply want to study on your own to earn credit for the course, search for *Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition* on the UFV website (www.ufv.ca).)

On-line courses take more self-initiative and planning than do traditional face-to-face courses. You need explicitly to schedule the lessons and assignments so that they are not pushed aside by the other, more immediately present parts of your life.

On-line: What do you need to know about computing?

You need access to the Internet. Please make sure that your Internet connection works well with the course materials as soon as the course begins. UFV can provide some technical assistance but cannot service your personal computer. In many cases, classmates are the best resource: post a message to the **Technical Help** forum of the **Bulletin Board**.

Most people—including me—are novices about some aspect of computing. And most people who know something about computing are more than willing to help. **So, ask for help!!**

For this course, you do not need to be an expert in your abilities with computers, but you do need some skills such as editing in a word processor, working with e-mail, using an Internet browser and the interface used to give the course over the Internet.

If you are a novice, read the reassuring article "[Learning how to learn computers: General principles for the novice](http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/AcadAffairs/CTL/tnt/lrncom.htm)" (www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/AcadAffairs/CTL/tnt/lrncom.htm)

For a tutorial on using the Internet, see Learn the Net (www.learnthenet.com) .

For tutorials on using Blackboard (the Web interface used in this course), **CLICK** on *Help* at the top right corner of your *Blackboard* Web page.

Free computing labs are available at UFV where you can use computers to prepare course materials, go on the Internet, etc. UFV may also offer computing orientation sessions.

Course Security

Access to the course website is usually limited to me and the students registered in the course using an ID and Password. **DO NOT SHARE THESE WITH ANYONE ELSE.**

Because of the nature of on-line courses, there may be occasional visitors to the class, *e.g.*, support personnel need to access the site. I will be discreet about whom I permit as visitors and will let you know if someone will be present for a substantial time (as opposed to briefly fixing software).

It is unlikely anyone would want to visit the course uninvited, but there is no guarantee of privacy anywhere in cyberspace.

If you use a public terminal (*e.g.*, at a hotel or library) to access the course, **completely close the browser software when you are finished** in order to prevent another person from accessing the course with your identification and doing mischief in your name.

***On-line:* Study Skills**

Many of your standard study skills apply to on-line learning.

Some of your standard skills may work against you, such as attempting to be thorough in reviewing all the resources available, a task that is almost impossible on the Internet.

Some new skills will be needed, such as learning how to read on-line.

Use the **Discussions** bulletin board to let your coursemates know about effective and ineffective study strategies. And you might want to keep notes about your studying experiences in order to help you with future on-line courses.

The rule of thumb for any college-level course is that **you should spend two hours out of class for every hour that you spend in class.** In a face-to-face three credit course, that amounts to nine hours per week. You should plan to spend the same amount of time for an equivalent on-line course: **schedule** these hours in at least three sessions per week so that you can **check course *Discussions* about every other day.**

1. Explicitly schedule your time over several days in the week.

Research indicates that it is best if sessions are no more than two hours. Keep a record of your sessions: if you miss a session, then you have time to make up!

You will be asked to send me your schedule. It will help me to help you in a timely manner if I know when you will be on-line.

During your scheduled time, let those around you know you are "in class" and are not to be disturbed. Avoid distractions such as TV in your work area. (Many people find some non-distracting sound such as soft classical music helps them to concentrate.)

When time is up for a scheduled work session, **STOP.** Turn off the computer if necessary in order to keep yourself from going back. Then you will be more likely to return to work as scheduled.

2. Make a To-Do list.

Write down things you have to do.

Then decide what to do right now, what to schedule for later, what to get someone else to do, and what to put off indefinitely, even until after the course is over.

Ask yourself: What are the consequences if I don't do this now, or don't do it at all?

Write down important course dates in your weekly planner.

If you become ill or suffer other misfortune, do not try to keep up with the course any more than you would with a face-to-face course. **Let me know what is going on**, and we will decide what must be done in order to compensate for it.

3. Reflect on how you spend all your time.

Identify the time when you do your best work, *e.g.*, first thing in the morning, or an hour after you begin to work: use it to do your most difficult work.

Use the time when you do **not** work as effectively to do less demanding work, *e.g.*, reading mail, making a To-Do list.

4. Study actively: See [Methods of Inquiry, A.](#)

Take notes. You might audio record your thoughts so that you can listen to them on the way to work or while doing other tasks.

Think about the material in the context of where you must use it, *e.g.*, answering exam questions or writing an essay.

5. Read on-screen as little as possible.

People tend to **scan** rather than **read** on-screen. And it is often much harder to see the overall shape of a document on-screen unless it is well laid out with collapsible headings (as are most course materials that I write).

Having documents on-line is great for sending them to others, for searching, for filing in an orderly fashion, for editing to suit your own purposes, and for reference.

But **PRINT OUT** any longer documents that you want to read.

If you must read on-line:

Maximize the height of your browser but narrow its width to half-screen or less.

Change your browser fonts to a good size and style for reading. Serif fonts (such as this one, Times Roman, with the little extra strokes projecting from the main line of the letter) are much easier to read at length than are non-serif fonts (such as this in Arial).

Read in short time segments, looking away from the screen periodically. Get up and move around frequently, at least a couple of times per hour.

Read actively, pausing to reflect on what you are reading and taking notes.

When surfing for learning, don't follow links randomly. Instead, adopt a pattern (from the top down or from the bottom up) to help you keep your place.

On-line: What does on-line discussion involve?

You are expected to log on at least three times a week, read all messages relevant to the course, and respond where appropriate.

Postings

Share your ideas or questions. Others will appreciate your participation. Many have not had a great deal of experience with on-line courses, so there are no dumb questions. If someone asks a question, respond helpfully.

However, **if you post many messages per week**, check whether you are so dominating discussion that not many others are participating. Do not attempt to answer **all** discussion questions or respond to **all** postings from others. Write when you have something to say.

Postings can include:

Responses to others' postings, including to my questions.

Notes about the most interesting or striking idea in the reading, lecture, class discussion and why you selected it: did it relate to some experiences in your life, to other courses you have had, to something you have read or seen in the media?

Questions, doubts, agreements provoked by the reading, lecture, class discussion—something you did not understand, further possible implications—and why this matter is important.

Clarifications of key terms and concepts.

Examples, including observations from your own experiences, stories from the media.

Presentation of alternative perspectives to those presented in readings, lectures, class discussion, or others' postings.

Analyses and evaluations of arguments: their assumptions, evidence, implications.

Suggestions for improving the course.

Questions or ideas for an essay topic, essay sketches or outlines, or full drafts of essays for others to comment on them. (Writing an essay can be like writing a journal where you write your initial thoughts on a question, receive comments, revise or defend further your thinking, etc., until you have a finished product for me to mark.)

Responses to topics and questions at the end of each chapter in the textbook.

Netiquette**Keep your on-line discussion civil and co-operative.**

Netiquette is the term used to describe rules of courtesy for using electronic communication effectively and considerately. Those who violate these rules frequently and do not heed my warnings may be deleted from the *Discussions* area and hence from the opportunity to earn a mark for on-line discussion.

1. Take into account whom you are addressing and who else will read the message.

Do not say things that you would not say publicly.

Do not address comments to individuals unless you want all to read your message.

Do not share confidential information. If you are quoting from something others have sent you personally, ask their permission first.

Read your message before you send it: once it is sent, you cannot change it.

2. Organise and write your messages to make efficient use of our time and resources.

Use the *Discussions* organisation to clearly indicate the subject matter of the message and to which message—if any—you are replying.

First, check the *Discussions Topic* list to see if there is an area devoted to the subject, *e.g.*, on Utilitarianism. Most *Discussions* topics will be **public**—any class member can read and post to them. Other topics will be **private**, *e.g.*, a topic only for those leading discussion on utilitarianism. Post your message to the appropriate topic.

Second, before starting a new topic, search for other messages that already address the subject. Messages are displayed as an outline or tree of the various discussion topics. The messages in these discussions can be viewed as **threaded**: they are linked together so that you can see the original message, the replies to that message, the replies to the replies, and so forth. If there is already a thread on your topic, post your message with that same subject heading. If there is no appropriate thread, start one by posting a message with a clear subject heading and that addresses only one issue.

Avoid responding to *Discussions* messages that have become stale or have taken another direction.

Do not merely repeat or agree with a comment that someone else has already made. If you want to express your agreement with what has already been said, add something to it such as a good example.

Include in your reply only the relevant part of a previous message. If you **REPLY** to a message, cut out portions that are not needed; or delete the text and if needed, substitute a summary.

Keep the length of your message reasonable. If you are citing or quoting long pieces of text, these can be appended as an attachment or a link, rather than as part of the message itself.

Use private *Mail* for messages to individuals rather than cluttering *Discussions*.

Put your name at the end of your message so that readers do not have to search through the header to determine the author.

3. Because electronic communication does not show non-verbal cues, use humour and sarcasm carefully so that your meaning comes through clearly. [Emoticons](#) assist with non-verbal cues. [Acronyms](#) also help, and save a lot of typing. Use but do not overuse these cues! Emoticons are like exclamation points: too many too often cause them to lose their meaning! Imagine how you would look face-to-face if you were emoting constantly!!

4. Do not send unkind messages.

Follow the same principles of respect and professionalism in an online classroom as in a face-to-face classroom, including sensitivity to issues of race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, culture, etc.

When critical comments are called for, try to frame them constructively and tactfully.

The purpose of discussion is not to win a debate but to think about matters of importance, to learn, and to enjoy ourselves.

Report any problems in this area to the instructor.

5. Electronic communication can be very informal, but aim for clarity and readability so that your message comes through rather than your mistakes.

Proof your work before posting it, but on-line discussion is informal and so allows for more errors than in formal writing. You may adopt a particular informal style to convey your on-line personality.

Everyone makes minor errors in their posts; overlook minor errors made by others. Focus on ideas, not form, although they are often quite interdependent.

But the biggest error is to let a fear of making mistakes keep you from contributing.

Indicate what you are talking about fully instead of presuming that others know what book you are referring to, etc.

Make new paragraphs often.

DO NOT USE ONLY CAPITAL LETTERS—THAT IS SHOUTING ON-LINE!!

Avoid correcting other people's language.

(These rules are adapted from several sources, including www.albion.com/netiquette/).

Common Emoticons and Acronyms (www.pb.org/emoticon.html)

Most emoticons will look like a face (eyes, nose, and mouth) when rotated 90 degree clockwise. Emoticons can help avoid misinterpretation of the writer's intents. While there are no standard definitions for the following emoticons, here are their most usual meanings.

:) or :-)	Expresses happiness, sarcasm, or joke
:(or :-(Expresses unhappiness
:] or :-]	Expresses jovial happiness
:[or :-[Expresses despondent unhappiness
:D or :-D	Expresses jovial happiness
:I or :-I	Expresses indifference
:/ or :-\	Indicates undecided, confused, or sceptical. Also :/ or :\.
:Q or :-Q	Expresses confusion
:S or :-S	Expresses incoherence or loss of words
:@ or :-@	Expresses shock or screaming
:O or :-O	Indicates surprise, yelling or realisation of an error ("uh oh!")

Acronyms

AAMOF	as a matter of fact
BTW	By the way
CMIIW	correct me if I'm wrong
EOL	end of lecture
FAQ	frequently asked question(s)
FWIW	For what it's worth
FYI	For your information
HTH	hope this helps
IAC	in any case
IAE	in any event
IMCO	in my considered opinion
IMHO	in my humble opinion
IMO	in my opinion
IOW	in other words
LOL	lots of luck or laughing out loud
NRN	No reply necessary
OIC	Oh, I see
OTOH	on the other hand
ROF	rolling on the floor
ROTFL	rolling on the floor laughing
RSN	real soon now
TIA	thanks in advance
TIC	tongue in cheek
TTYL	talk to you later
TYVM	thank you very much
WYSIWYG	what you see is what you get
<G>	Grinning
<J>	Joking
<L>	Laughing
<S>	Smiling
<Y>	Yawning