# Introduction to Philosophy

**Professors**:
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**Schedule**: Rm TBA, Module 3-4 (days/times are subject to revision).
Lectures (21): Three blocks of seven; Thursdays, 10:40—11:30pm; Jan— May 2016
Seminars (20): Three blocks (7/7/6); Thursdays, 12:40—14:30pm; Jan— May 2016

**Assessment**:
40% class participation.
60% oral exams.

## Syllabus

This section of the course will provide an introduction to classical philosophical problems and texts. We shall consider issues of the self or subjectivity in order to raise questions such as: Who am I? What does it mean to be a subject? And what is a human being?

Week 1:               Lecture: Haas on General Introduction to Philosophy
Introduction.
Seminar: Haas.

Week 2:               Lecture: Haas on The Idea of the Human Being
Plato, *Phaedo*.
Seminar: Haas.

Week 3:               Lecture: Haas on the Cartesian Subject
Descartes, *Meditations*.
Seminar: Haas.

Week 4:               Lecture: Haas on Transcendental Subjectivity
Kant, *Prolegomena*.
Seminar: Haas.

Week 5:               Lecture: Haas on The Historical Subject
Hegel, *Philosophy of History*.
Seminar: Haas.

Week 6:               Lecture: Haas on the End of Subjectivity
Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*.
Seminar: Haas.

Week 7:               Lecture: Haas on Beyond the Subject
Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*.
Seminar: Haas. Oral exam.

This segment of the course will focus on the relation between philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of science.

Week 8:    Lecture: Moro on Introduction to Philosophy of Science
           Ross, G.M., "Science and Philosophy," *Companion to the History of Modern Science*, ed. by R.C. Olby et. al. (Routledge, 1990), pp. 799-815.
           Seminar: Moro.

Week 9:    Lecture: Moro on Scientific Method
           Butterfield, H., "The Experimental Method in the Seventeenth Century," *The Origins of Modern Science , 1300–1800* (Free Press, 1997), pp. 65–82.
           Henry, J., "Experience and Experiment," *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science* (Palgrave, 2002), pp. 30-53.
           Seminar: Moro.

Week 10:   Lecture: Moro on Newton's Achievement and its Legacy
           Gabbey, A., "Newton and Natural Philosophy," *Companion to the History of Modern Science* (Routledge, 1990), pp. 243-263. .
           Seminar: Moro.

Week 11:   Lecture: Moro on Darwin, Darwinism, and Natural Theology
           Brooke, J.H., "Darwin and Victorian Christianity," *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 192-213.
           Danziger, K., "Wilhelm Wundt and the Emergence of Experimental Psychology," *Companion to the History of Modern Science*, Ch. 25.
           Seminar: Moro.

Week 12:   Lecture: Moro on Philosophy of Mind
           Smith, R., *The Fontana History of the Human Sciences* (Fontana, 1997), pp. 126–143 (two sections, on "Cartesian Dualism" and "Les Passions de l'Ame").
           Russell, B., "Personal Memory and Self-Knowledge," *The Analysis of Mind* (Allen and Unwin, 1921), Ch.9.
           Dancy, J., *An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), Ch. 12.
           Seminar: Moro.

Week 13:   Lecture: Moro on Knowledge and Skepticism
           Bradley, "Knowledge and Probability" (up until 'Relevant Alternatives Theories of Knowledge'/ from 'Relevant Alternatives Theories of Knowledge').
           Dretske, "The Pragmatic Dimension of Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies,* 40 (3):363--378 (1981).
           Stine, "Skepticism, Relevant Alternatives, and Deductive Closure," *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 29 (1976).
           Schaffer, "What Shifts? Standards, Thresholds or Alternatives," *Contextualism in Philosophy: Knowledge, Meaning, and Truth* (Oxford University Press).
           Seminar: Moro.

Week 14:            Lecture: Moro on Conclusions from the Philosophy of Science
                    Seminar: Moro. Oral exam.


This segment of the course will provide an overview on various intersections between information technology and philosophy. We will discuss foundational issues, most notably the ontology of computer programs and the philosophical analysis of programming, as well as real-world implications of these debates. We will then turn to questions of professional ethics for IT workers, with an emphasis on public-facing obligations. Specialised topics may include: the ethics of search engines, ethical problems of social media, robotics and autonomous agents, privacy and IT, and the applicability of philosophical theories to software engineering.

Week 15:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
                    ACM/IEEE-CS Joint Task Force on Software Engineering Ethics,
                    *Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Professional Practice* (Version 5.2), s. l.,
                    s. a., URL = <www.acm.org/about/se-code/>

                    Seminar: Hessbrügen-Walter. Davis, Michael. "Thinking Like an
                    Engineer: The Place of a Code of Ethics in the Practice of a
                    Profession." Philosophy and Public Affairs 20:2 (Spring 1991)
                    150-167, URL= <http://ethics.iit.edu/projects/thinking-like-engineer>

Week 16:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
                    Bynum, T., "Computer and Information Ethics," The Stanford
                    Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N.
                    Zalta (ed.), URL=<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/
                    entries/ethics-computer/>
                    Seminar: Hessbrügen-Walter. Deborah G. Johnson, "Computer Ethics,"
                    in: The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Computing and
                    Information (ed. L. Floridi), Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell,
                    2004, 65-76

Week 17:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
                    Sullins, J., "Information Technology and Moral Values," The Stanford
                    Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta
                    (ed.), URL=
                    <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/it-moral-values/>
                    Seminar: Hessbrügen-Walter.

Week 18:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
                    Tavani, H., "Search Engines and Ethics"
                    Seminar: Hessbrügen-Walter. Litska Strikwerda, "Theft of virtual items in
                    online multiplayer computer games: an ontological and moral analysis,"
                    Ethics Inf Technol (2012) 14:89–97 DOI 10.1007/s10676-011-9285-3,
                    URL= <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10676-011-9285-3>

Week 19:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
                    Turner, R., "The Philosophy of Computer Science," The Stanford
                    Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N.
                    Zalta (ed.), URL=

<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/computer-science/>
Seminar: Hessbrügen-Walter. Graham White, "The Philosophy of Computer Languages," in: Floridi 2004, 237-247

Week 20:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
Vallor, S., "Social Networking and Ethics" Vallor, Shannon, "Social Networking and Ethics," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),  URL= <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/ethics-social-networking/ >
Seminar: Hessbrügen-Walter. Johnny Hartz Soraker, "How shall i compare thee? Comparing the prudential value of actual and virtual  friendship,"  Ethics Inf Technol (2012) 14:209–219
DOI    10.1007/s10676-012-9294-x
Oral exam.

Week 21:            Lecture: Hessbrügen-Walter on Philosophy of Technology
van den Hoven, J., et.al., "Privacy and Information Technology," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/it-privacy/>
No Seminar.


**Some General Internet Resources in Philosophy:**
HSE library website: http://library.hse.ru/
Oxford University Library: http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/
UCD Philosophy Subject Guide: http://libguides.ucd.ie/philosophy


**Course Methods:**
Lectures and discussions, presentations and exams, will be used to teach students how to read, write, argue and think philosophically with regards to course-content.

**Objectives and Competencies:**
Students will learn how to avoid the following errors:
1.      Confusing argument with *debate*, taking a strong, oppositional position on a topic and then trying to win points.
2.      Mistaking *assertion* for argument—for even the most powerful rhetoric remains unconvincing, if not supported by clear evidence and logical reasoning.
3.      Assuming that merely *describing* an issue or question is as good as arguing for a position.
4.      Thinking in *simple* black-and-white terms, neglecting the nuances of argument.
5.      Citing an *authority* with almost blind reverence, and *ignoring* other points of view.
6.      Taking *opinion* for argument, writing papers that are *subjective*.
7.      Constructing a *weakly-supported* or *poorly-reasoned* argument because it is, after all, their opinion, and they have a right to it.
8.      Believing mere *comparing-and-contrasting* is an argument.
9.      Relying on *structures* learned in school or university, which may not suit arguments or academic requirements in philosophy.
10.     Not going from *facts* to an argument for the interpretation of the facts.

Thus, we will learn how to prepare a philosophy presentation and/or paper with an original thesis, and a strongly-supported and well-reasoned argument based on textual evidence—*not* observation, data, information, opinion, examples, belief, experience or feeling. Students will learn how to be as accurate and as complete as possible (two major criteria).

### ***Students Learn How to:***

1.    Do philosophical research.
2.    From this research (reading, thinking), come to establish evidence.
3.    From evidence, or its absence, make inferences.
4.    Testing the validity of inferences, come to philosophical intuitions.
5.    Taking those intuitions and develop a thesis.
6.    Consider the thesis' validity, and use evidence and reason to construct arguments.
7.    Test the arguments to determine how convincing they are, and challenge the arguments of others by employing critical analysis.

The process is not linear; rather, as students learn to craft arguments, they will be encouraged to return to the evidence, draw new inferences and form new insights that, in turn, affect the arguments that we are making. If the goal of philosophical argument is knowledge, we need to begin with the assumption—like Socrates—that we do not know. We need to understand that our own premises and biases are not fact, that what we learned at school or university, from this expert or that authority, is not necessarily correct. We thus challenge our premises and biases. In this way, we can hope to discover and to challenge the premises and biases of others. In short, students will learn to be open to experiencing some shift in understanding, to being convinced by others, and so to arguing in such a way that others experience it and are convinced as well.

One way to facilitate this shift is to think in a way that moves back-and-forth between evidence and argument—while maintaining a clear and logical progression. Thus, students will learn to:

1.    Know the difference between reliable and unreliable interpretations;
2.    Be persistent to observe objectively and thoroughly, and to collect textual evidence;
3.    See patterns or relationships in what we have observed or discovered in our reading;
4.    Infer and assume carefully;
5.    Form conclusions (and provisional conclusions) while keeping an open mind;
6.    Create original and convincing arguments, understanding that these arguments are not the last word, but part of an ongoing debate in a scholarly process.

Students will learn how to construct a presentation and/or paper. Although there are many methods, one is "the movement from thesis to analysis to synthesis" in order to:

1.    Introduce the work in a way that catches the reader's attention. A startling claim or a question that ends in a (hypo)thesis. (1/10 of the text.)
2.    Gather and analyze the textual evidence: "See the trees for the forest." Apply the criteria of "accuracy and completeness." Analyze texts and logical reasoning; find ambiguities, questions, problems. Examine secondary sources. Consider translations. (4/5 of the text.)
3.    Evaluate the evidence: immanent critique means "giving them enough rope to hang themselves." Synthesize our arguments into a whole: "See the forest for the trees." Use logical reasoning to make it convincing. Draw out and clarify the implications. Conclude that the hypothesis has been proven, but that questions remain. (1/10 of the text.)