

## PPE3016 – FOUNDATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

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### 1. CONVENOR

Email: herman.salton@auw.edu.bd  
Office Number: H603  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11am-1pm  
(Please stick to these days and times. If you really cannot make them, please email me in advance to arrange an appointment. Thank you).  
Class Times: Monday and Wednesday, 1.30pm-2.50pm  
Class Room: G403

Qualifications: LLB (Trento), PhD Law (Auckland), MPhil (Oxford), PhD IR (Wales)  
Areas of Expertise: International Relations  
United Nations  
International and Diplomatic History  
Human Rights (especially racial and religious discrimination)  
International Law (especially international organizations)  
Comparative Law (especially France and the USA)

Profile: Herman Tutehau Salton, PhD, was educated at the universities of Trento, Auckland, Oxford and Wales. A Senior Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, City University of New York (CUNY), he was also a visiting scholar at Sciences-Po, Paris (France) and TUJ, Tokyo (Japan); a human rights officer at the Icelandic Human Rights Centre, Reykjavík (Iceland); and an Associate with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, United Nations Headquarters, New York City (USA). He has published in the areas of international politics, international law, global history and human rights. He speaks English, French, Italian and Spanish.

### 2. DESCRIPTION

This introductory course considers the main concepts that have been engaging philosophers from the ancient times to the contemporary age. It adopts an unusual format: rather than dealing with individual philosophers or schools of thought, it will review a number of philosophical principles and see how different thinkers have dealt with such principles throughout the ages. Philosophers have been asking questions about the nature of life and human existence for a very long time, questions that do not have definite answers and that are still with us today. What is truth? How can we live good lives? What is virtue? Is there life after death? What are the limits of freedom in a civilized society? Indeed, what is a civilized society? This course addresses some of these questions by means of maxims or aphorisms: for each

maxim, we shall consider the context in which its author produced it as well as its meaning, then and now. Students are thus encouraged to focus on those philosophical ideas, rather than on their authors or schools of thought.

### 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should:

- Be familiar with the most basic philosophical concepts;
- Understand major philosophical problems and debates;
- Learn to discuss and analyze major philosophical questions;
- Acquire a basic knowledge of philosophical terms;
- Understand how and why philosophy is seen as elevating human curiosity;
- Use philosophy to adopt an ethical approach to living.

### 4. TEXTBOOK

The main text from which readings will be taken is:

W. Buckingham et al  
*The Philosophy Book*  
London: DK Publishers, 2011

Further readings will be provided prior to class.

### 5. SCHEDULE

#### Week 1: Introduction

Mon, 24 August 2015 - Introducing the Course, the Teacher and the Students  
*Question: Why him? Why us? Why here?*

Wed, 26 August 2015 - What is Philosophy?  
*Maxim: 'The beginning of thought is in disagreement' (E. Hoffer)*  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 12-17*

#### PART ONE: THE ANCIENT WORLD (700 BCE, 250 CE)

#### Week 2: Numbers and Happiness, Faithfulness and Measure

Mon, 31 August 2015 – Numbers and Happiness  
*Maxim 1: 'Number is the Ruler of Forms and Ideas' (Pythagoras)*  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 20-21 and 26-29*  
*Maxim 2: 'Happy is he who overcomes his ego' (The Buddha)*  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 30-33 + TBA*

Wed, 2 September 2015 – Faithfulness and Measure  
*Maxim 1: 'Hold Faithfulness and Sincerity as First Principles' (Confucius)*  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 36-39*  
*Maxim 2: 'Man is the measure of all things' (Protagoras)*  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 30-33 + TBA*

### **Week 3: Self-Reflection and Knowledge, Truth and Death**

Mon, 7 September 2015 – Self-Reflection and Knowledge

Maxim 1: 'The life which is unexamined is not worth living' (Socrates)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 46-49*

Maxim 2: 'Earthly knowledge is but shadow (Plato)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 52-55 + TBA*

Wed, 9 September 2015 – Truth and Death

Maxim 1: 'Truth resides in the world around us' (Aristotle)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 58-63*

Maxim 2: 'Death is nothing to us' (Epicurus)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 64-65 + TBA*

#### PART TWO:

#### THE MEDIEVAL WORLD (250-1500)

### **Week 4: Soul and God, Grief and Universe**

Mon, 14 September 2015 – Soul and Grief

Maxim 1: 'The soul is distinct from the body' (Avicenna)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 70-71 and 58-63*

Maxim 2: 'Philosophy and religion are not incompatible'

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 82-83 + TBA*

Wed, 16 September 2015 – Grief and Universe

Maxim 1: 'Don't grieve. Anything you lose comes around in another form' (Rumi)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 86-87*

Maxim 2: 'The universe has not always existed' (Aquinas)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 90-95 + TBA*

#### PART THREE:

#### RENAISSANCE AND THE AGE OF REASON (1500-1750)

### **Week 5: Ends and Knowledge, Machine and Thought**

Mon, 28 September 2015 – Ends and Knowledge

Maxim 1: 'The end justifies the means' (Machiavelli)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 100-101 and 104-107*

Maxim 2: 'Knowledge is power' (Bacon)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 110-111 + TBA*

Wed, 30 September 2015 – Machine and Thought

Maxim 1: 'Man is a machine' (Hobbes)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 112-115*

Maxim 2: 'I think, therefore I am' (Descartes)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 118-123 + TBA*

### **Week 6: Imagination and Experience, Truth and Perception**

Mon, 5 October 2015 – Imagination and Experience

Maxim 1: 'Imagination decides everything' (Pascal)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 124-125*

Maxim 2: 'No man's knowledge here can go beyond his experience' (Locke)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 130-133 + TBA*

Wed, 7 October 2015 – Truth and Perception

Maxim 1: 'There are two kinds of truths: of reasoning and of facts' (Leibniz)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 134-137

Maxim 2: 'To be is to be perceived' (Berkeley)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 138-141 + TBA

PART FOUR:

THE AGE OF REVOLUTION (1750-1900)

**Week 7: Doubt and Custom, Freedom and Bargain**

Mon, 12 October 2015 – Doubt and Custom

Maxim 1: 'Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd' (Voltaire)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 144-145 and 146-147

Maxim 2: 'Custom is the great guide of human life' (Hume)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 150-153 + TBA

Wed, 14 October 2015 – Freedom and Bargain

Maxim 1: 'Man was born free yet everywhere he is in chain' (Rousseau)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 156-159

Maxim 2: 'Man is an animal that makes bargains' (Smith)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 160-163 + TBA

**Week 8: Bodies and Happiness, Gender and Reality**

Mon, 26 October 2015 – ROUNDTABLE (IN CLASS)

Wed, 28 October 2015 – Gender and Reality

Maxim 1: 'Mind has no gender' (M. Wollstonecraft)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 175

Maxim 2: 'Reality is a historical process' (Hegel)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 180-185 + TBA

**Week 9: Limitations and Freedom, Class Struggle and Action**

Mon, 2 November 2015 – Limitations and Freedom

Maxim 1: 'Every man takes the limits of his vision for the limits of the world' (Schopenhauer)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 186-188

Maxim 2: 'Over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign' (Mill)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 190-193 + TBA

Wed, 4 November 2015 – Class Struggle and Action

Maxim 1: 'The history of society is the history of class struggle' (Marx)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 198-203 + TBA

Maxim 2: 'Act as if what you do makes a difference' (W. James)

Readings: *Textbook*, pp. 206-209 + TBA

PART FIVE:

THE MODERN WORLD (1900-1950)

**Week 10: Man and Intuition, Problems and Suffering**

Mon, 9 November 2015 – Man and Intuition

Maxim 1: 'Man is something to be surpassed' (Nietzsche)

*Readings: Textbook, pp. 212-213 and 216-221 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'Intuition goes in the very direction of life' (Bergson)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 226-227 + TBA*

Wed, 11 November 2015 – Problems and Suffering  
Maxim 1: 'We can only think when we are confronted with problems' (J. Dewey)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 228-231 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'It is only suffering that makes us persons' (De Unamund)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 233 + TBA*

### **Week 11: Work and Language, Self and Science**

Mon, 16 November 2015 – Work and Language  
Maxim 1: 'The road to happiness lies in a diminution of work' (Russell)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 236-239 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'The limits of my language are the limits of my world'  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 248-251 + TBA*

Wed, 18 November 2015 – Self and Science  
Maxim 1: 'We are ourselves the entities to be analyzed' (Heidegger)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 252-255 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'A scientific statement must be falsifiable' (Popper)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 262-265 + TBA*

### **Week 12: Existence and Banality, Women and Freedom**

Mon, 23 November 2015 – Existence and Banality  
Maxim 1: 'Existence precedes essence' (Sartre)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 268-271 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'The Banality of Evil'  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 272 + TBA*

Wed, 25 November 2015 – Women and Freedom  
Maxim 1: 'Man is defined as a human being and woman as a female' (De Beauvoir)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 276-277 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'The fundamental sense of freedom is freedom from chains' (I. Berlin)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 280-281 + TBA*

## PART SIX: CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY (1950-PRESENT)

### **Week 13: FINAL ESSAY + Justice and Markets**

Mon, 30 November 2015 – FINAL ESSAY (IN CLASS)  
Wed, 2 December 2015 – Justice and Markets  
Maxim 1: 'The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance' (Rawls)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 294-295 + TBA*  
Maxim 2: 'Knowledge is produced to be sold' (Lyotard)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 298-299 + TBA*

### **Week 14: Conclusions**

Mon, 7 December 2015 – Race and Choice  
Maxim 1: 'For the black man, there is only one destiny, and it is white' (Fanon)  
*Readings: Textbook, pp. 300-301 + TBA*

Maxim 2: 'There is nothing inside us except what we put ourselves' (Rorty)  
Readings: Textbook, pp. 316-319 + TBA

Wed, 9 December 2015 – Common Themes in Philosophy

Question 1: What are the common philosophical themes of this course?

Question 2: Is there any difference between ancient and contemporary philosophy?

## 6. CLASS FORMAT

The course involves a mixture of lectures and discussions. All classes will be highly interactive: in my view, the role of the teacher is not to offer the right answers but to ask probing questions, especially in a course such as this that deals with contested topics which rarely have definitive answers. So it will not be enough for you to come to class: you will need to be proactive and participate in the discussion. Naturally some of you will be shyer than others, which is fine (the best students are not always the most talkative). But you do need to interact with your peers.

The subjects discussed are hotly debated and some of you will have strong opinions about them. Others will find the materials totally alien. Both situations are normal—philosophy and the methods of philosophical enquiry are contested concepts, which is why they are also exciting. Yet this is also why I expect you to come to class having done the readings and ready to discuss the materials or concepts with your colleagues. I make a conscious effort to invite discussion, so I will raise provocative questions and you should be prepared to engage with them.

In the course of our discussions, it is imperative that you interact respectfully with your peers. As we will be talking about issues for which there are no easy answers, it is important that you understand that everyone comes to the class with different life experiences which shape their beliefs and with different levels of prior exposure to the ideas and events discussed in class. I will thus expect—and will not condone anything short of—an attitude of collegial respect.

## 7. ASSESSMENT

- 1) Participation (20%)  
Your participation grade will depend on the regularity of your attendance to class, on your punctuality and on your contribution to class debate (such as engaging with me when I ask questions and asking questions when your colleagues present). Unjustified absences will result in penalties as per AUW's policy.  
*Date:* Your performance is monitored from Day 1, but your participation grade will be communicated to you by November's end.
- 2) Memo (20%):  
As an expert on philosophy, you should choose one of the maxims contained in the textbook *which we have not seen in class* and write a short (1,000 words max) memo about it. In particular, you should explain both the reasons in favour and against that specific maxim: why did the author believe in it, and why do his/her critics reject it?  
*Due:* Monday, 28 September 2015
- 3) Roundtable (20%):  
This will be an in-class assignment in the form of a debate on a large philosophical issue which will be communicated to you before the event. The class will be divided into two groups, with one side

defending a certain position and the other side opposing it. Roles will be assigned randomly and you will have to defend the role assigned to you regardless of whether you think it is sound or not. Readings and more information will be given closer to the date.

Due: Monday, 26 October 2015

4) Final Essay (40%)

This in-class essay will test the depth and breadth of your knowledge. Your abilities to comprehend and analyse a number of ethical issues in contemporary world politics will be assessed. This is a pre-seen essay: 10 essay questions will be sent to you 24 hrs before the event so as to give you time to choose two and to structure your essay.

Due: Monday, 30 November 2015

## 8. KEY DATES

**Eid Break:** 22-24 September 2015

**Fall Break:** 18-22 October 2015

**Memo:** Mon, 28 September 2015

**Roundtable:** Mon, 26 October 2015

**Final Essay:** Mon, 30 November 2015

## 9. GRADING SCALE

96.68 to 100 = A+	86.68 to 89.99 = B+	76.78 to 79.99 = C+	66.78-69.99 = D+
93.33 to 96.67 = A	83.33 to 86.67 = B	73.33 to 76.67 = C	63.33 to 66.67 = D
90 to 93.32 = A-	80 to 83.32 = B-	70 to 73.32 = C-	60 to 63.32 = D-
			< 59.99 = F (Fail)

*Please Note:* While marks are important and you should strive to obtain the best possible grade, the way you study is even more important. In this course, factual knowledge is essential but insufficient to perform well; critical thinking is what will make the difference not only in terms of marks but also—and more importantly—in terms of your development. Consequently, the mere regurgitation and memorization of facts will not take you far—only the critical assessment of them will. What I am interested in is *your* approach to a problem. However, you will only be able to acquire this analytical capacity if you come to class, read widely and participate in the discussions. Remember: analytical reasoning without facts is impossible, but facts without any analytical framework are useless! Both are needed and will be required.

## 10. PLAGIARISM

Academic honesty is critically important and is expected of all of you at all times. For your information, definitions of and policies regarding academic honesty are detailed in the AUW Hand-out. Please read *carefully* the section on academic integrity on pages 13-16. Violations of academic honesty will result in failing grades for assignments and/or the entire course.

## 11. CLASS BEHAVIOUR

My assumption will be that each student in this class is motivated, intelligent and considerate of the opinions of others, and my expectations of you reflect this assumption. I would like to ask

you to please come to class on time and participate while you are here. Of course, sometimes circumstances prevent your timely arrival—in these cases, please enter quietly and sit by the door. If you need to leave early, please sit by the door and leave quietly. If you will frequently need to arrive late or leave early, please speak to me about it. I am committed to starting and ending every class exactly on time, so please do not prepare to leave before I have ended class. It is disrupting to your colleagues and to myself. Also, please ensure that you do not read or sleep in class, nor talk to students around you without good reason. Please also be sure to turn off all phones and beepers. It is not appropriate to leave class in order to answer a call: if you feel that you have extenuating circumstances (e.g., a family emergency), please see me before class to discuss it. I strongly encourage you to stop me during class if you have a question or relevant comment. If you feel uncomfortable talking during class, please approach me after class. It is my job to help you understand the material and I will do whatever I can to make sure that you do.