

# SYLLABUS

PHIL 150  
11:45 - 1:25 M, W  
(Carr)

## Introduction to Philosophy

**Instructor:** Dr. Michael Aristidou

**Phone:** 425-895-4400, ext.4464

**Office Hours:** 1:30-2:00 T, F

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**Textbook:** *Living Issues in Philosophy*, by H. Titus, M. Smith, and R. Nolan  
Oxford University Press, 9th edition (2002)  
(Hardback, new \$76.50, used \$49.00).

Other useful texts:

*Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, by J. Perry and M. Bratman, Oxford University Press, 3rd edition (1998), (Hardcover, new \$67.00, used \$33.00).

*101 Philosophy Problems*, by M. Cohen, Routledge, (2007), (Softcover, new \$13.50, used \$12.00)

*What Does It All Mean?: A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*, by T. Nagel Oxford University Press, (1987), (Softcover, new \$16.50, used \$5.00)

*The Problems of Philosophy*, by B. Russell, Oxford University Press, 2nd edition (1997)  
(Softcover, new \$10.50, used \$4.00)

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other relevant papers, and articles, some of which will relate to the philosophy of games and computer games.

**Course Overview:** This course introduces some of the basic philosophical issues and questions related to everyday life. *Topics include:* Human Nature (self, mind, consciousness, freedom), Values (ethics, morality, aesthetics), Knowledge (reasoning, rationality, truth), Philosophy of Science (universe, origins of life), Philosophical Positions (naturalism, idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism), Philosophy of Religion (religion, god(s)). *Applications include:* Philosophical issues related to Games, and Computer Games, in general (definitional issues, philosophical themes in games, games and art, etc).

**Course Outline:** The following topics will be covered: Ch.1 – What is Philosophy, Ch.2 – Human Nature, Ch.3 – The Self, Ch.4 – The Mind, Ch.5 – Freedom, Ch.6 – Values, Ch.7,8 – Ethics and Morality, Ch.9,10 – Knowledge, Ch.11 – Philosophy of Science, Ch.12-16 (in brief)– Naturalism, Realism, Existentialism, etc, Ch.17,18 – Philosophy of Religion.  
(+ Topics from other sources, and papers, related to philosophy of games and computer games).

**Grading:** - 7 take-home Homework assignments, 10% each. The homework will contain 1 or 2 study-questions, or a project question, to be answered in the form of a 1-3 pages paper. Those will be given out every Friday and they should be returned every Tuesday thereafter. (**No** paper score will be dropped).

- 1 Final Project, 30%. The student(s) can choose from A, B or C:

- A. This project should make use of a philosophical theme from the course into a game, or a computer game, designed by the students. The project should result into a 4-7 pages paper and a presentation of that paper at the end of the course. Its 30% grade will be split into 20% for the paper plus 10% for the presentation.
- B. This project should identify a philosophical theme from the course within a current game, or a computer game, and analyze it. The project should result into a 5-8 pages paper and a presentation of that paper at the end of the course. Its 30% grade will be split into 20% for the paper plus 10% for the presentation.
- C. This project should focus on a paper already published by someone else on the philosophy of computer games. The students should try to analyze, criticize, defend, or extend the arguments and conclusions of that paper. The project should result into a 4-7 pages paper and a presentation of that paper at the end of the course. Its 30% grade will be split into 20% for the paper plus 10% for the presentation.

The students could work in groups of two, and all project proposals should be approved by the instructor.

(*Note:* Well written papers, clarity of thought, well presented arguments and ideas, are necessary conditions for earning a good grade in all papers and projects. See: [http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/syllabus\\_paper.html](http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/syllabus_paper.html) for more details on how to write philosophical papers)

**Grading Scale:** A = 87-100%, B = 77-86%, C = 67-76%, D = 50-66%, F = 0-49%

**Test Make-up Policy:** Speak to me **BEFORE** if you cannot submit a paper, or leave a telephone, or an e-mail message. If you are not able to contact me before the submission, contact me within the **NEXT** couple of days. Documentation to verify the reason you submit a paper is required. Only once a late, or an earlier, paper submission will be allowed for the semester and that if there are extremely special circumstances.

**Class Policy:** All cell phones, pagers, laptops, etc. must be turned off during class. No food or drinks are allowed in class. Only pencil is to be used on tests. All papers must be your work. Dishonesty is a violation of the code of student conduct and it will **not** be tolerated.

**Important Dates:** July 22<sup>nd</sup> (Final Project presentation)