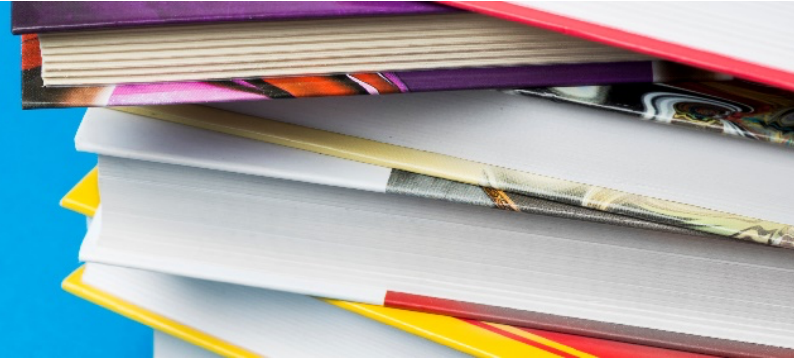




# Short Syllabus



## Course Title

**Fundamental Concepts in Philosophy**

## Lecturer

**Dr. Adrian Sackson**

## Contact details

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## Semester

**Fall 2022**

## Short Description

What is truth, and how can we know it? What is reality? How should we live our lives? How can we determine what is morally good? How should societies be organized? These are some examples of fundamental questions that lie at the heart of the discipline of philosophy. In this course, we will be introduced to the practice of philosophy in a thematic way. We will begin by asking: What is philosophy? How is it different from other forms of inquiry, thought, and reflection? We will then explore several main areas of the field: logic, epistemology (including philosophy of science), metaphysics (including questions relating to philosophy of religion and philosophy of mind), ethics, and politics. In each area, we will examine several key concepts and big questions, and we will be introduced to some important debates and influential thinkers. Some of the questions we will explore in these sub-fields include:

**Logic:** What are rational ways to think, argue, and justify beliefs? What are not?

**Epistemology and Philosophy of Science:** What does it mean for something to be true? When are we justified in saying we know something, and what does that mean? What makes some knowledge 'scientific'? What is the difference between science and pseudo-science?

**Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion, and Philosophy of Mind:** Can belief in God be rationally justified? How are thoughts connected to physical reality? Could a machine have conscious experiences?

**Moral & Political Philosophy:** Are there moral absolutes or is morality relative? How can one determine what is right and wrong morally? What is a justly governed society? How should material goods, rights, and liberties be allocated?

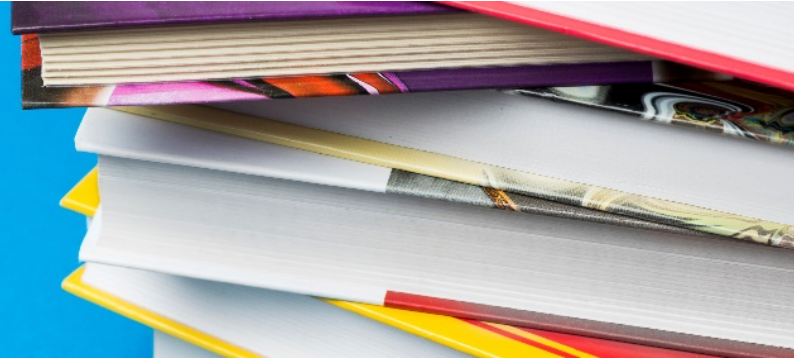
## Final grade components

### **Preliminary Assignment [2 pages] (20%):**

The topic of the preliminary written assignment is logic and argumentation. It will assist students in solidifying the thinking skills we learn early in the semester that will help them tackle the big ideas and arguments we will meet throughout the course.



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## **Final Take-Home Exam [6 pages] (70%):**

In the final take-home exam, students will write three short expository essays, explaining three different concepts or arguments – one related to epistemology; one related to metaphysics; and one related to moral or political philosophy. Students will be provided in advance with a master list of questions, from which the actual exam questions will be selected.

## **Participation (10%):**

Attendance is mandatory. Participation will be assessed on the basis of the student's *serious engagement* with the class on a weekly basis.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three unauthorized absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.\*

## **Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.\*

## **Final assignment**

Exam dates and submission deadlines are published on the Liberal Arts website. Courses with a final exam also have a second make-up exam. Students requiring an extension for a final paper must submit an Academic Committee Request Form to the Liberal Arts office in advance of the deadline. Late papers will be subject to a point deduction.\*

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\* See Liberal Arts academic handbook for further details