



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 361 Lec. 01**  
**“Evidence”**

**Fall Term 2015**

**Course Outline**

**Lectures: Tu/Th, 9:30-10:45**

**Room: MS 211**

**Instructor:** Jeremy Fantl

**Office:** SS 1238

**Phone:** 403-220-5022

**Email:** [jfantl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jfantl@ucalgary.ca)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 2-3:30

**Course Description**

Many people think that we need to engage with evidence against our beliefs. But there are times when doing so can seem unnecessary and even wrong. We'll consider arguments that evidence should guide all our beliefs, as well as arguments that sometimes we can and even should ignore evidence that's presented to us. In the second half of the course, we'll look at two areas in which these issues become pressing: conspiracy theories and psychic phenomena.

**Required Texts**

Selected online articles.

**Course Requirements**

- Two **papers**, the first 3-5 pages long (worth 25%), due October 22<sup>nd</sup> in class, the second 4-6 pages long (worth 25%), due in class on the last day, December 8<sup>th</sup>.
- A take-home **midterm exam** (worth 25%), due October 27<sup>th</sup> in class.
- A **Registrar-scheduled final exam** (worth 25%).

**Letter Grade Conversion Table**

A+: 98.33	B+: 88.33	C+: 78.33	D+: 68.33	F: 55
A+/A: 96.67	B+/B: 86.67	C+/C: 76.67	D+/D: 66.67	
A: 95	B: 85	C: 75	D: 65	
A/A-: 93.33	B/B-: 83.33	C/C-: 73.33	D/D-: 63.33	
A-: 91.67	B-: 81.67	C-: 71.67	D-: 61.67	
A-/B+: 90	B-/C+: 80	C-/D+: 70		

Final Grades are computed by rounding to the nearest recognized letter grade.

**Policy on Late Assignments**

You get a no-questions-asked extension on one and only one take-home assignment, as long as you clear it with me at least a day in advance of the due date. **All unexcused late assignments lose the equivalent of 1/3 full letter grade for each day the assignment is late, to a maximum of the equivalent of 4 full letter grades. Missing assignments receive a zero.** Late midterm exams are not accepted more than one week late.

## Syllabus

### Part I: Open and Closed-Mindedness

9/8, Tues: Intro	
9/10, Thurs: Belief and evidence	William Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
9/15, Tues: Dogmatism and vaccinations	Maria Konnikova, "I Don't Want to Be Right"
9/17, Thurs: Two ways to conduct inquiry	Deidre M. Le Fevre, et. al., "Genuine Inquiry: Widely Espoused Yet Rarely Enacted"
9/22, Tues: Dogmatism and the Men's Rights Movement	Lindy West, "No, I Will Not Take the Men's Rights Movement Seriously"
9/24, Thurs: Confrontations with radical disagreement	Harriet McBryde Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations Or How I Spent One Day as a Token Cripple at Princeton University"
9/29, Tues: The expository essay	Essay #1 Assigned
10/1, Thurs: Stifling arguments	Jenny Teichman, "Humanism and Personism"
10/6, Tues: Radical open-mindedness	Michael Scriven, "Critical for Survival"
10/8, Thurs: The source of the virtue of open-mindedness	Nomy Arpaly, "Open-Mindedness as a Moral Virtue"
10/13, Tues: An argument for trusting scientific orthodoxy	Ward Jones, "Dissident vs. Loyalist: Which Scientists Should We Trust?"
10/15, Thurs: An argument for a liberal conception of what constitutes appropriate dissent	Kristen Intemann and Inmaculada de Melo-Martín, "Are there limits to scientists' obligations to seek and engage dissenters?"
10/20, Tues:	BUFFER DAY

### Part II: Two Applied Issues

#### A. Conspiracy Theories

10/22, Thurs: Essay #1 due	<i>JFK</i> , selection (watch in class)
10/27, Tues: Midterm exam due	Posner, <i>Case Closed</i> , selection
10/29, Thurs: Against conspiracy theorizing	Daniel Pipes, <i>How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where it Comes From</i> , selection
11/3, Tues: Conspiracy theorizing, defended	Charles Pigden, "Popper Revisited, or What is Wrong with Conspiracy Theories," selection
11/5, Thurs: Conspiratorial Occamism	Brian Keeley, "Of Conspiracy Theories"
11/10, Tues: A different role for conspiracy theories	Susan Feldman, "Counterfactual Conspiracy Theories"
11/17, Tues: How to integrate sources	Essay #2 Assigned

#### B. Psychic Phenomena

11/19, Thurs: Debunking psi	NOVA, <i>Secrets of the Psychics</i> (watch in class)
11/24, Tues: Explaining psychic experience	Susan Blackmore, "Psychic Experiences: Psychic Illusions"
11/26, Thurs: Some pro-psi data	Dean Radin, "On Science and Psychic Phenomena"
12/1, Tues: Conflict between psi and current science?	Jean Burns, "What is Beyond the Edge of the Known World?"
12/3, Thurs: A case for abandoning psi	James E. Alcock, "Give the Null Hypothesis a Chance"
12/8, Tues: Essay #2 due	EXAM REVIEW

### **Academic Honesty**

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment, an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw from the University. See the relevant sections on 'Academic Misconduct' in the current University Calendar. Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about correct referencing, consult your instructor.

### **Academic Accommodation**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on student accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf)

### **D2L Help**

Desire2Learn is the University of Calgary's online learning management system. Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/services/d2l> for help.

### **Student Advising and Information Resources**

- **General Academic Concerns and Program Planning**— Have a question but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in the Faculty of Arts. Drop in at SS102, call 403-220-3580, or email [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca). Advisors in the ASC can also provide assistance and advice in planning your program through to graduation. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> for detailed information on common academic concerns.
- **Advice on Philosophy Courses** - You may find answers to your more specific questions about a philosophy degree on the Department of Philosophy's website <http://phil.ucalgary.ca> or contact one of Philosophy's current Undergraduate Advisors (see below)
- **Registration Overload/Prereq Waivers** – If you are seeking to register in a Philosophy course that is full or to get permission to waive the prereqs for a course, email the instructor of the course.

### **Protection of Privacy**

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor or teaching assistant.

### **Safewalk**

Call 403-220-5333 (24/7/365) for a Safewalk volunteer to accompany you safely to your destination on campus including parking lots, housing, and the LRT station or use a Campus Help Phone.

#### **PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT**

The Department of Philosophy is located on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the Social Sciences Building and on the web at [www.phil.ucalgary.ca](http://www.phil.ucalgary.ca)

#### **PHILOSOPHY UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISORS FOR FALL 2015:**

Jeremy Fantl (Undergrad Director) [jfantl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jfantl@ucalgary.ca)

Reid Buchanan [buchanar@ucalgary.ca](mailto:buchanar@ucalgary.ca)

Ann Levey (Honours Program Advisor) [levey@ucalgary.ca](mailto:levey@ucalgary.ca)

For assistance with registration issues in Philosophy courses, contact

Merlette Schnell ([schnell@ucalgary.ca](mailto:schnell@ucalgary.ca))