



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department of Philosophy

**PHIL 361 Lec. 01**

**“Evidence”**

Winter Term 2020

M/W/F 12:00-12:50 ST 128

Online via D2L as of March 16, 2020

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Instructor:** Jeremy Fantl

**Email:** jfantl@ucalgary.ca

**Office:** SS 1238

**Office Hours:** available on Wednesdays from 1-2 via email.

**Office Phone:** 403-220-5022

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

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. We'll close by looking at view about the evidence provided by the study of conspiracy theories.

**PREREQUISITES:**

None.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Outline the fundamentals of recent philosophical debates on the proper responses to counterevidence.
- Write a persuasive argumentative paper.
- Describe in sympathetic terms the case for the other side.
- Engage in constructive dialogue with fellow peers.

**REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Coursepack available at Bound & Copied.

**COURSE ASSESSMENT**

- Two **papers**, the first 3-5 pages long (worth 25%), due Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> in class, the second 4-6 pages long (worth 25%), due on the last day of class, Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, via D2L.
- A take-home **midterm exam** (worth 25%), due February 24<sup>th</sup> in class.
- A take-home **final exam** (worth 25%), due Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, via D2L.

**\*\*Please screenshot the D2L submitted field or sent email when submitting work electronically in case of systems issues.**

## 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.

Letter Grades translate to numerical values according to the following scheme. Final Grades are computed by rounding to the nearest recognized letter grade.

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.

## SYLLABUS

### Part I: Evidence and Reasonable Belief

1/13, Mon: Intro	
1/15, Wed: Belief and evidence	William Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
1/17, Fri:	BUFFER DAY
1/20, Mon: The need for counterarguments	John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , selection
1/22, Wed:	BUFFER DAY
1/24, Fri: The problem of speech glut	Zeynep Tufekci, "It's the (Democracy-Poisoning) Golden Age of Free Speech"
1/27, Mon: Deepfakes!	Regina Rini, "Deepfakes Are Coming. We Can No Longer Believe What We See."
1/29, Wed:	BUFFER DAY
1/31, Fri: Dogmatism and vaccinations	Maria Konnikova, "I Don't Want to Be Right"
2/3, Mon:	BUFFER DAY
2/5, Wed: Concerns about echo chambers	C. Thi Nguyen, "Escape the Echo Chamber"
2/7, Fri: Relocating concerns about echo chambers	Jennifer Lackey, "Echo Chambers are Not the Problem"
2/10, Mon:	BUFFER DAY
2/12, Wed: Radical open-mindedness	Michael Scriven, "Critical for Survival"
2/14, Fri:	BUFFER DAY Takehome Midterm Exam Handed Out

### Part II: The Proper Response to Alternative Views

2/17-2/21: Term Break	NO CLASSES
2/24, Mon: The Expository Essay	Takehome Midterm Exam Due Essay #1 Assigned
2/26, Wed: Two ways to conduct inquiry	Deidre M. Le Fevre, et. al., "Genuine Inquiry: Widely Espoused Yet Rarely Enacted"
2/28, Fri:	BUFFER DAY

3/2, Mon: The Duty to Object	Casey Rebecca Johnson, "Speak Up!: Inquiry and Expressing Disagreement"
3/4, Wed: Confrontations with radical disagreement	Harriet McBryde Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations Or How I Spent One Day as a Token Cripple at Princeton University" Takehome Midterm Exam Due
3/6, Fri:	BUFFER DAY
3/9, Mon: Dogmatism and the Men's Rights Movement	Lindy West, "No, I Will Not Take the Men's Rights Movement Seriously" Essay 1 Due
3/11, Wed: Worries about excluding certain subject matter	Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, "The Coddling of the American Mind"
3/13, Fri:	BUFFER DAY
3/16, Mon: A sympathetic approach to no-platforming	Neil Levy, "Why No Platforming is Sometimes a Good Idea"
3/18, Wed:	BUFFER DAY
3/20, Fri: Some difficulties in knowing who to engage with	Kristen Intemann and Inmaculada de Melo-Martín, "Are there limits to scientists' obligations to seek and engage dissenters?"
3/23, Mon:	BUFFER DAY
3/25, Wed:	Essay #2 Assigned

### Part III: Conspiracy Theories

3/27, Fri: A Conspiratorial Case Study	<i>JFK</i> , selection (watch in class)
3/30, Mon: Debunking the JFK conspiracy theory	Gerald Posner, <i>Case Closed</i> , selection
4/1, Wed:	BUFFER DAY
4/3, Fri: A hostile approach to conspiracy theories	Daniel Pipes, <i>How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where it Comes From</i> , selection
4/6, Mon: A more sympathetic approach to conspiracy theories	Charles Pigden, "Popper Revisited, or What is Wrong with Conspiracy Theories," selection
4/8, Wed:	BUFFER DAY
4/10, Fri: Good Friday	NO CLASS
4/13, Mon: Easter Monday	NO CLASS
4/15, Wed:	Wrap-up and Exam Review Essay #2 Due

## IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

### Academic Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. The student accommodation policy can be found at [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf). Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

### Absence or Missed Course Assessments

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see [ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html](http://ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html)

### Student Support and Resources

Full details and information about the following resources can be found at [ucalgary.ca/Registrar/registration/course-outlines](http://ucalgary.ca/Registrar/registration/course-outlines)

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

### Academic Advising

If you are a student in the Faculty of Arts, you can speak to an academic advisor in the Arts Students' Centre about course planning, course selection, registration, program progression and more. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at [arts.ucalgary.ca/advising](http://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising) for contact details and information regarding common academic concerns.

For questions specific to the philosophy program, please visit [phil.ucalgary.ca](http://phil.ucalgary.ca). Further academic guidance is available by contacting David Dick (Undergraduate Program Director [dgdick@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dgdick@ucalgary.ca)) or Jeremy Fantl (Honours Advisor [jfantl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jfantl@ucalgary.ca)). If you have questions regarding registration, please email Rebecca Lesser (Undergraduate Program Administrator [phildept@ucalgary.ca](mailto:phildept@ucalgary.ca)).

### Writing Assessment and Support

The assessment of all written assignments—and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses—is based in part on writing skills. This includes correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as general clarity and organization. Research papers must include a thorough and accurate citation of sources. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services for assistance (one-on-one appointments, drop-in support and writing workshops). For more information, and other services offered by the Student Success Centre, please visit [ucalgary.ca/ssc](http://ucalgary.ca/ssc).

### **Online Resources and Electronic Devices**

Important information and communication about this course may be posted on D2L (Desire2Learn), UCalgary's online learning management system. Visit [ucalgary.service-now.com/it](http://ucalgary.service-now.com/it) for how-to information and technical assistance.

The instructor reserves the right to establish specific course policies regarding the use of electronic devices. If permitted, the use of devices must be exclusively for instructional purposes, and without disruption to the instructor or fellow students. Devices should be set to silent mode during lectures. Audio or video recording of lectures is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

### **Academic Misconduct/Honesty**

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which will be an F on the assignment or an F in the course, and possibly a disciplinary sanction such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at [ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html](http://ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html).

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 referencing, please consult your instructor.

### **University Policies**

The Instructor Intellectual Property Policy is available at [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/Intellectual%20Property%20Policy.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/Intellectual%20Property%20Policy.pdf)

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, as outlined at [ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip](http://ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip). The instructor (or TA) must return graded assignments *directly* to the student UNLESS written permission to do otherwise has been provided.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright ([ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf)) and requirements of the copyright act ([laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html](http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html)).