



FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 407 Lec 01 – A 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosopher  
Topic 4: “A. J. Ayer”**

**Fall Term 2010**

**Course Outline**

**Lectures:** Monday 3:00 – 5:30 in SA 145

**Instructor:** J. J. MacIntosh

**Office:** SS 1249

**Phone:** 403-220-3164

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

**Three notes about Email**

- (1) Students wishing to get in touch with me via email should ensure that “PHIL 407” or some other clearly identifying term occurs in the subject line. Otherwise there is a strong possibility that your message will be deleted unread as spam.
- (2) Should you change your email address during the term, please update this information online at your Student Centre as soon as possible. If you do not, and an email message is sent to the class, it will fail to reach you.
- (3) If you email me with a question which involves symbols, please submit the question as a pdf attachment – email tends to garble symbols.

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 11:00-12:00 or by appointment. Note that this means what it says. You are not limited to Wednesdays 11-12, but you may need to make an appointment. If you email me to ask for an appointment, please be sure to tell me the times you are available.

***Course Description***

An investigation into the philosophically important, wide-ranging, carefully argued, and often provocative views of A. J. Ayer in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, philosophy of religion, philosophical logic, and the history of philosophy. An outline of the topics to be discussed in detail and the class dates of such discussions will be posted separately on Blackboard.

At some point toward the end of term 15-20 minutes at the beginning of class will be used for the student surveys.

***Required Texts***

A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*

A. J. Ayer, *The Central Questions of Philosophy*

A. J. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*

A number of other works have been put on reserve at the library. A list will be posted separately on Blackboard.

## **Evaluation**

- Marks will be based on two tests. Each test will be worth 50% of the final mark. The first test will be an in-class test on Oct. 25; the second will be a take home test, given out on Nov. 29, due Dec. 6 (no late submissions accepted). After the first test students may, if they wish, submit an optional term paper. The term paper mark will, if higher, replace the test mark for the purpose of calculating the final mark, unless the test mark was an F, in which case that mark will stand. Deadline (firm) for term paper: two weeks after the return in class of the test. A draft of the paper may be submitted (hard copy or email) up to a week before the due date: comments and suggestions for improvement will usually be available the next day. The final version (this also holds for the take home test) may be either a hard copy or an email submission or both. If your paper is submitted electronically please submit it as a Microsoft word document, or a pdf document. There will be no registrar-scheduled final examination. The optional term paper should be long enough to allow for an adequate *discussion*—a critical investigation of the considerations *for and against* a given position—of the topic with which the paper deals. In general, a length between 3,000 and 6,000 words would be appropriate for the optional term paper.
- A passing grade on any particular component of the course is not required for a pass in the course as a whole.
- We are asked by the University to "Indicate when writing and the grading thereof is a factor in the evaluation of the student's work. (See [E.2 Writing Across the Curriculum](#) statement.)" Writing and the grading thereof is indeed a factor in the evaluation of your work. Your writing should be clear, coherent, and to the point. Your arguments should be plainly set out. If you take the writing of our subject, A. J. Ayer, as your model you will not go astray. Notice that footnotes of the incomplete and unhelpful sort offered in "E.2 Writing Across the Curriculum" (at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>) will be evidence of insufficient scholarly acumen. You may wish to consult the short notes on writing a philosophy paper on the Philosophy Department's website for a more helpful way of giving references. These notes also mention the relation between writing and philosophical evaluation.

## **Grading Method**

Your in class and take home tests, and your optional term papers will be graded on the standard university scale which ranges from A+ to F. Your mark may sometimes have a slash (/) in it, thus: B/B+. In such cases the first mark is the official mark, the second shows which end of the mark you are closer to. An A-/B+ is an A- at the lower end; an A-/A is an A- at the upper end. Letter grade marks will be averaged by using GPA numerical equivalents.

## **Spelling and Grammar**

More than five grammatical or spelling mistakes on any one page of an optional term paper or take home test will lead to the paper or test being returned for corrections before a mark is assigned. Corrections are due within two days of the return. Two examples of the same mistake count as two mistakes. Standard U. S. spellings (e.g., 'neighbor' for 'neighbour', 'center' for 'centre', 'theater' for 'theatre', etc.) are acceptable. Common mistakes in philosophy papers include: (1) misspellings of 'existence,' 'conceive,' 'argument,' and 'separate'; (2) the misuse of 'i.e.' for 'e.g.'; (3) the misuse of 'phenomena' and 'criteria' as singulars. They are plurals. The singulars are 'phenomenon' and 'criterion.'

Finally there is (4) the increasingly common use of 'it's' as a possessive. Perhaps this almost ubiquitous error will become standard, but it has not done so yet, and just as we do not speak of "he's book," or "she's pen" so we should not refer to "it's colour." Like "he's" or "she's," "it's" is a contraction, not a possessive. Of course you should avoid sexist language. In particular, remember that 'man' and 'he' are not gender neutral, and that 'girl' is not an appropriate term for adult women. (No doubt these remarks will have little practical relevance for *this* class; I put them in mainly to ensure that they remain unnecessary.)

***Policy on Late Assignments***

No late submissions accepted save in exceptional circumstances. Procrastination, apathy, sloth, laziness, writer's block, pressure of other work, and most personal problems do not constitute exceptional circumstances: they are simply part of the human condition.

## **INTELLECTUAL HONESTY**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, 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 and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test;*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

## **STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVES**

The Faculty of Arts Representatives are Laura Golebiowski ([arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca)), Bhuvana Sankaranarayanan ([arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca)), Lara Schmitz ([arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca)), and Vincent St. Pierre ([arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)).

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT**

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial FOIP Act in all aspects of its operations as a publicly funded institution. 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 unless other arrangements have been made in writing and filed with the Department Administrator.

## **SAFEWALK: PROMOTING CAMPUS SAFETY AND AWARENESS**

Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, Safewalk volunteers walk people safely to their destination on campus. This service is free and available to students, staff, and campus visitors. Safewalks are done in male/female pairs. The volunteers walk anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). To request a Safewalk volunteer to walk with you, call 403-220-5333 (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year) or use one of the Help Phones located across campus (they are not just for emergencies).