Postgraduate Certificate in Philosophy

2021-2022

Course code: 2122PCB750

COURSE GUIDE
Welcome to the Postgraduate Certificate in Philosophy, a University of Cambridge award offered by the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The Certificate is taught and awarded at FHEQ level 7 (i.e. Masters level) and attracts 60 credits. The award is completed in one academic year. For further information about academic credit please see our website: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/info/academic-credits-cats-points

The course offers three termly units and a syllabus and reading and resource list for each of these units are included in this course guide.

The course aims to:

- Provide students with specialist knowledge and understanding of philosophical ideas and concepts at the frontiers of philosophical debate and research;
- Enable students to acquire and develop the skills necessary to conduct critical analysis and evaluation at the highest levels; and
- Develop the student’s ability to analyse and evaluate different methods for conducting independent and collaborative research.

### Transferable skills for further study and employability

- The capacity for independent thought and judgement
- The development of independent learning, study and time management skills
- The deployment of skills in critical reasoning
- The development of competence in using IT to support one’s work
- The ability to work with others, productively and equitably
- The qualities necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and the demonstration of high levels of motivation and personal commitment through part-time study
- Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems;
- Effective communication skills, in person and in writing;

Additional skills specific to this course include:

- Advanced skills relating to critical analysis and creative thinking, abstraction and argumentation;
- The ability to apply a deep understanding of abstract concepts to contemporary problems;
- An emotional detachment from, and reengagement with, profound or ethical problems.

### Study hours

The award of academic credit is a means of quantifying and recognising learning and within the UK, one credit notionally represents 10 hours of learning\(^1\). Each of the units in this course attracts 20 credits so students should expect to need to study for approximately 200 hours in total to complete each unit successfully. However, it is recognised that students study at different paces and use a variety of approaches, so this is a recommendation, rather than a hard-and-fast calculation.


### Teaching staff

**Academic Director:**

Dr Alex Carter is Academic Director for Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies at the Institute of Continuing Education. He is a Bye-Fellow at Fitzwilliam College. Alex was awarded his PhD in Philosophy by the University of Essex in 2015; his thesis explores some of the surprising aspects of Wittgenstein’s views concerning freedom and fatalism. Before this, Alex studied Philosophy at the University of Wales, Swansea and the University of Bristol.
Alex's approach to teaching is to encourage students to feel the "pain of the problem" - to make plain the very real ways in which philosophical problems affect our lives. Accordingly, Alex is most keen to offer his support to philosophical projects that, not only inform contemporary debates, but actively affect change. Alex's ongoing research interests include Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the theology of Simone Weil and the philosophy of humour. He is currently researching the relationship between humour and creative practice via the concept of 'serious play'.

Tutors:

Dr Martin Parker Dixon is a College Teaching Associate in Music at St John's College. He studied composition and classical guitar at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. He studied music semiotics and the history of music theory at the Edinburgh University with Raymond Monelle. At Wolfson College Cambridge, his doctoral research concerned the Marxist and Kantian aspects of T.W. Adorno's philosophy of aesthetic production. His current research interests are in the interdisciplinary area of twentieth-century music and philosophy. He is currently working on the post-Wittgensteinian language-game theories of Wilfrid Sellars and Jean-François Lyotard, and their application in the analysis of artistic practices.

Dr Cecilia Muratori is Research Fellow at the University of Warwick. She is a historian of philosophy who publishes and teaches in English, Italian and German. Her main research interests are the role of mysticism in philosophical speculation, and the definition of the border dividing humans from animals. She is interested in the mediation of philosophical concepts through the visual arts and is co-curator of the first philosophical exhibition on Jacob Böhme. She aims to stimulate students to bridge the gap between historical texts and contemporary concerns in a critically engaged way. She is passionate about presenting and discussing with students difficult philosophical questions in a clear and approachable manner, but without sacrificing the complexity of the arguments.

Dr Dan Watts has been teaching at the University of Essex since 2007. He completed his doctoral work in philosophy at the University of Sheffield, having also studied history and philosophy as an undergraduate there. He taught Continental Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin for two years, and then took up a postdoctoral fellowship awarded by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences. His research interests include Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, existentialism and phenomenology, moral and political philosophy and the philosophy of religion.

Administrative staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arts and Sciences Enquiries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. <a href="mailto:artscience@ice.cam.ac.uk">artscience@ice.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. 01223 746418 / 746236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institute of Continuing Education

The Institute of Continuing Education’s administrative headquarters are at Madingley Hall, an elegant country house built in the 16th century and set in gardens of about seven acres, designed in the 18th century by Capability Brown. Please visit www.ice.cam.ac.uk and www.madingleyhall.co.uk for further information.

Contact details of ICE

Institute of Continuing Education
University of Cambridge
Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ
T: 01223 746222
www.ice.cam.ac.uk
ug-awards@ice.cam.ac.uk
Please also refer to the ‘information for students’ section on ICE’s website www.ice.cam.ac.uk/studying-with-us/information-for-students and the 2021-22 Student Handbook for award-bearing courses for further information and guidance relating to all aspects of the course including study skills, assignments, assessment and moderation. The Course Information and Help and Guidance section of the ICE VLE will also contain valuable information specific to your course.

Information correct as at 07/05/2021
Ancient Greek Philosophy

Start date 18 September 2021          End date 19 September 2021
Day Saturday - Sunday          Time 2-5pm
Tutor(s) Dr Martin Parker-Dixon          No of meetings 2

Aims
- Recognise that ancient philosophy was tasked with understanding and teaching how to lead a ‘good life’;
- Appreciate how abstract reasoning can have a bearing on the personal, the practical, and our orientation in the world;
- Consider historical, social and political contexts in the formation of philosophies of living;
- Apply an understanding of Ancient Greek approaches to learning in order to address contemporary philosophical problems.

Content
In this unit, students will explore the role philosophy has played in informing educational practice. Students will explore the way in which philosophy promotes both an inward-looking approach (the cultivation of the individual through self-reflection and self-understanding, often motivated by searching, ‘maieutic’ questioning by others) and an outward-looking moment of social engagement, dialogue and action. The principle at work here is that positive contributions to community and society are best accomplished by individuals who ‘know themselves’. In individual supervisions, students will be tasked with understanding the contemporary application of this thinking.

Presentation of the unit
The unit is taught via a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous content; lectures will be recorded and made available in advance of the workshops. Workshops will be delivered remotely through video-conferencing software. Students will also have a one-to-one supervision each term and will be supported online via the ICE’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The teaching block provides both content-focused and skills-focused tuition. Workshops and group exercises will be supplemented with additional readings, exercises and discussion forums accessible via the VLE.

Provisional lecture list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Indicative content</th>
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</table>
| Lecture| Presocratic thought | We will consider the early, poetic, and fragmentary speculations regarding the nature of the world, the cosmos, and the Divine, and how the human being fits into the scheme of things.
| Lecture| Socratic Dialogue   | During the Platonic Academy, philosophy comes of age. In this lecture we will focus on some key ideas that emerged from this School: The attempt to understand virtue, love, the good, and justice. |
Workshop | Aristotle and later Sceptical schools | Aristotle offered a more grounded and realistic perspective on the world and moral life. He foregrounded the principle of *eudaemonia* and a ‘middle way’ to happiness. Equally, there were some more extreme forms of scepticism entertained.

Lecture | Roman Stoicism | We will consider the exploration and expression of virtue in the political and the personal realms. We will read Marcus Aurelius and Seneca and see philosophy as a practical and therapeutic activity.

Lecture | Augustine and Boethius | In this session we will consider the late-Classical period and the confluence of classical education and Christianity. Does Augustine’s *Confessions* produce a modern sense of the ‘self’? We will also read some of a best seller from the Middle Ages, *The Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius.

Workshop | Scholasticism: a synthesis of faith and philosophy? | We will explore the rediscovery of Aristotle, the culture of learning in the early universities, disputation, and the tension between accepting truth through reason and through faith.

**Learning outcomes**

As a result of the unit, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- discern and evaluate differing conceptions of ethical life;
- demonstrate fluency and competence in the use of philosophical concepts;
- by analysing and emulating classical models, bring a variety of rhetorical techniques to their argumentative writing and speaking.
- apply an understanding of Ancient Greek approaches to learning in order to address one or more contemporary philosophical problems.

**Student assessment**

Students must produce two summative assignments:

**Summative assignment 1**
Students will be asked to submit one assignment of 2,500 – 3,000 words. Students can choose one of the following titles:

1. Do the Socratic dialogues prove that we can talk our way to real understanding?
2. How did pre-Christian philosophy understand the Divine?
3. Compare and contrast at least two different understandings of what it is to be happy.

Closing date for the submission of assignment 1: Tuesday 2nd November 2021 by 12:00 (noon) GMT*
*Greenwich Mean Time

**Summative assignment 2**
Students will also be asked to submit an assignment of 1,000 – 1,500 words on a topic of their choice. The title must be agreed with their supervisor before or during their first 1-2-1 supervision.

For the award of credit for this course summative assignment 1 is weighted at 20% of the course total and summative assignment 2 is weighted at 10% of the course total.
Closing date for the submission of assignment 2: Tuesday 7th December 2021 by 12:00 (noon) GMT*
*Greenwich Mean Time

Reading and resource list

Books


Online Resources:

Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
Syllabus for second unit
Lent term 2022

Early Modern Philosophy

Start date 5 February 2022  End date 6 February 2022
Day Saturday - Sunday  Time 2-5pm
Tutor(s) Dr Cecilia Muratori  No of meetings 2

Aims
- To develop interpretative skills through close reading of an influential philosophical text
- To become familiar with main concepts in Kantian philosophy
- To gain the argumentative tools for critical thinking
- To apply historical content to a contemporary problem.

Content
How is knowledge acquired? How should the philosopher proceed in understanding the world? This unit will explore Kant’s answers to these questions and place them in the context of 18th-century discourses on the role of reason for philosophical speculation. In class, students will undertake a detailed examination of Kant’s ‘On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy’, and ask: can philosophical knowledge be obtained through a private intuition? In individual supervisions, students will further discuss the methodology of philosophical work, and ask: what should be the “tone” of philosophy today?

Presentation of the unit
The unit is taught via a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous content; lectures will be recorded and made available in advance of the workshops (or delivered face-to-face if circumstances permit). Workshops will be delivered remotely through video-conferencing software (or face-to-face if possible). Students will also have a one-to-one supervision each term and will be supported online via the ICE’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The teaching block provides both content-focused and skills-focused tuition. Workshops and group exercises will be supplemented with additional readings, exercises and discussion forums accessible via the VLE.

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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Reason and Intuition: A brief history</td>
<td>We will consider the philosophical background of Kant’s essay ‘On a newly arisen superior tone in philosophy’, including Platonism, Scepticism and Cartesianism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Introduction to Kant</td>
<td>In this session we will place Kant’s contribution to the 18th-century debate on the role of reason in the broader context of his work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Interpreting ‘On a newly arisen superior tone in philosophy’ – 1</td>
<td>Close-text reading of our core text, with identification of key concepts and discussion of main topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey of key philosophical concepts discussed</td>
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</table>
Learning outcomes

As a result of the unit, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a complex understanding of the issues underpinning the core text of this course
- be able to place Kant’s work in its philosophical and historical context
- identify multiple interpretations of the conception of ‘rationality’ as a central one in the history of philosophy
- draw parallels with contemporary debates and identify contemporary applications for historical approaches.

Student assessment

Students must produce two summative assignments:

**Summative assignment 1**

Students will be asked to submit one assignment of 2,500 – 3,000 words. Students can choose one of the following titles:

1. How does Kant profile his understanding of ‘reason’ against previous philosophical interpretations and traditions?
2. According to Kant, “to philosophize through feeling […] is ultimately exposed to a test at which it is necessarily bound to fail”. What does Kant mean in this quotation?
3. Hegel compared intuition to ‘a shot from a pistol […] which has already finished with all the other standpoints simply by declaring that it will take no notice of them’. What different conceptions of ‘intuition’ can you find in Kant’s text, and do you see parallels with Hegel’s ‘pistol shot’?

**Closing date for the submission of assignment 1: Tuesday 1st March 2022 by 12:00 (noon) GMT**

* Greenwich Mean Time

**Summative assignment 2**

Students will be asked to submit an assignment of 1,000 – 1,500 words on a topic of their choice. The title must be agreed with their supervisor before or during their first 1-2-1 supervision.

For the award of credit for this course summative assignment 1 is weighted at 20% of the course total and summative assignment 2 is weighted at 15% of the course total.
Closing date for the submission of assignment 2: Tuesday 5th April 2022 by 12:00 (noon)

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

Books

**Set Text:**


**General introductions, commentaries and interpretations:**


Online Resources:

[Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy](https://plato.stanford.edu/)

[Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy](https://www.iep.utm.edu/)
Syllabus for third unit
Easter term 2022

Existentialism

Start date 14 May 2022
Day Saturday - Sunday
End date 15 May 2022
Time 2-5pm
Tutor(s) Dr Dan Watts
No of meetings 2

Aims

- Provide students with an overall understanding of Kierkegaard’s distinctive philosophical approach
- Advance students’ understanding of key topics in existential thought, including: death, tragedy, anxiety, sin.
- Develop students’ interpretative skills, through text-based workshops
- To apply existential thought to address contemporary philosophical problems.

Content

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) has been called ‘the father of existentialism’. Certainly, his work has been pivotal for major subsequent figures in European Philosophy, from Husserl and Heidegger to Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Derrida and Deleuze. But Kierkegaard’s contributions are difficult to pin down, not least because of the ways his enigmatic texts resist interpretation in terms of theories and doctrines. This final unit will introduce Kierkegaard’s idea of a radical alternative to systematic philosophy. Topics covered will include: the limits of reason, the use of ethical exemplars, the earnest thought of death, and the essence of tragedy.

Presentation of the unit

The unit is taught via a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous content; lectures will be recorded and made available in advance of the workshops (or delivered face-to-face if circumstances permit). Workshops will be delivered remotely through video-conferencing software (or face-to-face if possible). Students will also have a one-to-one supervision each term and will be supported online via the ICE’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The teaching block provides both content-focused and skills-focused tuition. Workshops and group exercises will be supplemented with additional readings, exercises and discussion forums accessible via the VLE.

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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Introducing Kierkegaard</td>
<td>This session will introduce Kierkegaard’s work against the background of the emerging nineteenth-century discourse around ‘the crisis of modernity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Introducing Johannes Climacus</td>
<td>This session will introduce Kierkegaard’s fictional philosopher, Johannes Climacus, focusing on his critique of ‘the objective tendency’ in modern life and as exemplified in the system-building of German Idealism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Thoughts of Death</td>
<td>This text-based workshop will examine extracts from Kierkegaard’s work on the question of what it means truly to think about death.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>The Essence of Tragedy</td>
<td>This session will introduce the essay in Kierkegaard’s Either/Or entitled, ‘Ancient Tragedy’s Reflection in the Modern’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Anxiety and Fallenness</td>
<td>This text-based workshop will examine extracts from Kierkegaard’s work on the connection between anxiety and tragedy and the religious category of sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>The Subjective Thinker</td>
<td>This session will return to Johannes Climacus and his overall conception of what it is truly to think through what it means to be human.</td>
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</table>

**Learning outcomes**

As a result of the unit, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- demonstrate an overall understanding of Kierkegaard’s existential thought, as shaped in a context of 19th century discourse around ‘the crisis of modernity’ and in opposition to ‘the objective tendency’.
- reflect critically on key topics in existential thought, including death, tragedy, anxiety, sin.
- plan and write an essay on some aspect of Kierkegaard’s work.
- draw parallels with contemporary philosophical debates and/or identify practical applications of existential thought (supervision).

**Student assessment**

Students must produce two summative assignments:

**Summative assignment 1**
Students will be asked to submit one assignment of 2,500 – 3,000 words. Students can choose one of the following titles:

1. With reference to Kierkegaard, assess the view that, since I will never experience it, I need not worry about my own death.
2. Discuss the account of the essence of tragedy advanced in the essay ‘Ancient Tragedy’s Reflection in the Modern’, in Kierkegaard’s Either/Or.
3. Explain, illustrate and assess the idea of subjective thinking advanced by Kierkegaard’s fictional philosopher, Johannes Climacus.

**Closing date for the submission of assignment 1: Tuesday 7th June 2022 by 12:00 (noon) BST**
*British Summer Time

**Summative assignment 2**
Students will also be asked to submit an assignment of 1,000 – 1,500 words on a topic of their choice. The title must be agreed with their supervisor before or during their first 1-2-1 supervision.

For the award of credit for this course summative assignment 1 is weighted at 20% of the course total and summative assignment 2 is weighted at 15% of the course total

**Closing date for the submission of assignment 2: Tuesday 12th July 2022 by 12:00 (noon) BST**
*British Summer Time
Reading and resource list

Books

**Set texts (selections from the following):**


**General introductions, commentaries and interpretations:**


By the tutor:


Watts, D. ‘Kierkegaard and the Limits of Thought’, *Hegel Bulletin*:

Watts, D. ‘Kierkegaard on Truth: One or Many?’, *Mind*: https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzw010


Watts, D. ‘Kierkegaard, Repetition and Ethical Constancy’ *Philosophical Investigations*, DOI: 10.1111/phin.12169

**Online Resources:**

Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michaelmas 2021</td>
<td><strong>Ancient Greek Philosophy</strong></td>
<td>Teaching Block 1</td>
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<td>Lent 2022</td>
<td><strong>Early Modern Philosophy</strong></td>
<td>Teaching Block 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter 2022</td>
<td><strong>Existentialism</strong></td>
<td>Teaching Block 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst every effort is made to avoid changes to this course, changes to course-content and structure and timings may be made. Students will be consulted on any changes.

University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ
Tel 01223 746222  www.ice.cam.ac.uk