

Philosophy 4821.1 Special Topics in Philosophy (CRN: 15545)

The Philosophy of Karl Popper

4 – 5:15 pm, Mondays and Wednesdays
Fall Semester, 2016-2017
Sobey Building 159

Instructor: Mark Mercer
Office: McNally North Room 524
Phone: 420-5825 (office) and 422-5789 (home)
Office hours: Monday & Wednesday, 10.00 am to 3:30 pm, or by appointment

Students in this course will read and discuss five or six papers by Karl Popper. Our task will be to understand Popper's method of conjecture and refutation and its implications for metaphysics, epistemology, political philosophy, and the art of living.

Texts:

We will read five or six papers from the collections *Conjectures and Refutations* and *The Myth of the Framework*. Suggestions include "Science: Conjectures and Refutations," "Three Views Concerning Human Knowledge," "Toward a Rational Theory of Tradition," "Back to the Presocratics," "Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Scientific Knowledge," "The Myth of the Framework," and "Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences."

Evaluation:

Two essays, the first three to five pages long, the second five to eight pages long. The first essay is worth 40% of the course grade, the second is worth 60% of the course grade.

The first essay is due the beginning of class Monday 3 October. The final version of the second essay is due 12 noon Monday 12 December. A preliminary draft of the second essay is due 12 noon Monday 5 December. It will be returned to the student Wednesday 7 December with comments from the instructor so that the student can prepare the version.