



PHIL*4370 Current Debates in Metaphysics

Fall 2018
Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy
Credit Weight: 0.50
Version 1.00 - August 23, 2018

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

An advanced study of problems concerning the nature of reality.

Pre-Requisite(s): 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level or 12.50 credits

1.2 Course Description

This course surveys the development of our philosophical and scientific understanding of space and time from the ancient Greeks to the present day. We begin with Plato and Euclid. We then focus on the early modern debate about the reality of space in the work of Descartes, Newton, Leibniz, and Kant. We look at the revolutionary impact of conventionalist and empiricist accounts of space and time in the 19th and 20th centuries. The final section of the course briefly introduces key issues in the philosophy of time: the direction of time; Husserl's phenomenology of the temporal characteristics of experience; and Dainton's attempt to reconcile the experience of the passage of time with current spacetime theory in physics.

1.3 Timetable

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00AM - 11:20AM, MCKN, Room 312

1.4 Final Exam

No final exam.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructor(s)

Andrew Wayne

Email: awayne@uoguelph.ca

Telephone: +1-519-824-4120 x56787

Office: MCKN 331

Office Hours: Mondays, 2 - 3:30 and by appointment.

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resource(s)

Texts and Course Materials (Textbook)

- Nick Huggett, *Space from Zeno to Einstein* (MIT Press, 1999)
 - Online materials at <http://courselink.uoguelph.ca>. You are responsible for accessing CourseLink regularly. Some course materials and grading comments may only be available on CourseLink.
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4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand, explain and assess major moments in the development of conceptions of space and time from the ancient Greeks to the present day.
 2. Understand, explain and assess key philosophical concepts including realism and anti-realism in metaphysics, induction and justification in epistemology, and the analysis of experience in phenomenology.
 3. Prepare a sustained piece of philosophical writing in which a topic is articulated clearly and a stance on that topic is supported by appropriate and well thought-through reasons.
 4. Argue successfully for your own view and be able to identify and critically evaluate patterns of argumentative reasoning in the work of others.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

5.1 Lecture

September 10 - Section 1. Introduction

Topic(s): Plato

Reference(s): Huggett, Ch. 1

September 17

Topic(s): Euclid & non-Euclidean geometry

Reference(s): Huggett, Ch. 2 and pp. 226-233

September 24 - Section 2. Substantivalism and relationalism

Topic(s): Descartes and Newton

Reference(s): Huggett, Chs. 6 and 7

October 1

Topic(s): Leibniz and Clarke

Reference(s): Huggett, Ch. 8

October 10

Topic(s): Sklar and empiricism

Reference(s): Sklar, pp. 229-234

October 15 - Section 3. Kant and conventionalism

Topic(s): Kant

Reference(s): Huggett, Ch. 12

October 22

Topic(s): Kant (continued)

Reference(s): Huggett, Ch. 12 (read it again!)

Midterm October 24

October 29

Topic(s): Poincaré and conventionalism

Reference(s): Huggett, Ch. 13

November 5

Topic(s): Reichenbach and empiricism

Reference(s): Sklar, pp. 94-101 and 113-122

November 12 - Section 4. Time and phenomenology

Topic(s): The direction of time and the "moving now"

Reference(s): Horwich, pp. 15-33

Paper #1 due November 14

November 19

Topic(s): Husserl on the temporal character of experience

Reference(s): Miller

November 26

Topic(s): The experience of time in the block universe

Reference(s): Dainton

Paper #2 due December 7

5.2 References

References

- Dainton, Barry. 2011. "Time, Passage, and Immediate Experience." *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*. Craig Callender: Oxford University Press.
- Horwich, Paul. 1987. *Asymmetries in Time*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Huggett, Nick, Ed. 1999. *Space from Zeno to Einstein*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Miller, Izchak. 1982. "Husserl's Account of Our Temporal Awareness." *Husserl, Intentionality, and Cognitive Science*. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press: 125-146.
- Sklar, Lawrence. 1974. *Space, Time, and Spacetime*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

6 Assessments

6.1 Course Requirements

10% Best 10 weekly reading responses

10% Class participation

20% Presentation

20% Midterm test

40% Two synthesis papers, each 1,400 to 1,700 words, each worth 20%

Reading responses are due by 9:30 am before each Monday class, submitted via CourseLink. They should be 300-400 words in length, and should synthesize and present one to three main points of the reading for the week. Each reading response should end with a good question about the reading. Each satisfactory reading response adds 1 percentage point to your final grade, up to a maximum of 10 points. Late responses will not be accepted. Additional in-class exercises may also be a part of this component of your grade.

6.2 Additional support

Students with special needs or requiring additional support are encouraged to speak with me as early in the term as possible to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made.

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#) are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7.3 Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for [Dropping Courses](#) are available in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance, and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas

7.6 Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.
