



PHIL*2370 Metaphysics and Mind

Winter 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - January 01, 2019

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course studies major theories of the nature of reality, and of issues and problems that arise in the investigation of fundamental features of the world. Texts read may be either historical or contemporary. Among possible topics explored in the course are materialism, free will, and determinism, the nature of time, and the position of consciousness in the world.

Pre-Requisite(s): 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL*1000, PHIL*1010, PHIL*1030, PHIL*1050)

1.2 Course Description

This course is an introduction to some of the most enduring problems in Western analytic metaphysics. We will consider two questions: "What are we?" and "What can we do?" The answers to these questions are far from simple. We need to know what kinds of things exist to say that we are a thing of that kind. We need to know what it means to exist to say that certain things exist. We even need to know why anything exists to say why some things exist and some don't! Similarly, we can't say that we know what we can do if we don't know what parts of our behaviour are under our control. We can't say what is under our control if we don't have a concept of what it means to cause things to happen. And the whole system is challenged if it turns out that time and change are impossible! In short, this course examines some of the questions that are central to the human experience.

1.3 Timetable

Lectures are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1300 to 1420 (1:00 - 2:20 PM) in MacKinnon 231.

1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest

information.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor: Kyle Bromhall
Email: kbromhal@uoguelph.ca

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resource(s)

What is this thing called Metaphysics? 3d. Ed. (Textbook)

Use *only* the third edition. Earlier editions are substantially different and are missing most of the information that you will need for this course. We will be using most of the book (including for assessments); I *strongly recommend* that you purchase it.

Various Articles (Article)

All articles are available on Ares.

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. identify many of the perennial problems of Western analytic metaphysics and their mainstream solutions.
 2. discuss and evaluate the central arguments about the relation of mind to action.
 3. synthesize difficult passages into a concise, working set of notes.
 4. develop a thesis and defend it in a position paper.
 5. prepare a professional, philosophically-sound piece of writing on an issue of philosophical importance.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Unit One: "What are we?" includes all lectures from week one to week six.

Unit Two: "What can we do?" includes all lectures from week eight to week thirteen.

All lecture themes and topics are subject to change. Refer to CourseLink for the latest

information and for the reading list.

5.1 Lecture

Week 1

Topic(s): "Is metaphysics possible?"

Week 2

Topic(s): "Why is there something rather than nothing?"

Week 3

Topic(s): "Do unicorns exist?"

Week 4

Topic(s): "What is a sandwich?"

Week 5

Topic(s): "What is 'us'?"

Week 6

Topic(s): "Could there be artificial selves?"

Week 7

Topic(s): **WINTER BREAK**

Week 8

Topic(s): "What causes what?"

Week 9

Topic(s): "Must we act?"

Week 10

Topic(s): "How can we act freely?"

Week 11

Topic(s): "What happens?"

Week 12

Topic(s): "What is this thing called time?"

Week 13

Topic(s): "What else is there to think about?"

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

Course Engagement (10%)

Date: Ongoing

At the end of weeks four, nine, and thirteen, you will complete a self-assessment form about your engagement with the course material. See the specifications for more details.

Essays (60%)

Date: See description

At the beginning of the term, I will distribute a list of possible topics and questions for your essays.

The first essay is a 1250-word **response paper** due by **2300 (11:00 PM)** on **12 February** and is worth **20%** of your final grade. The second essay is a 1500-word **position paper** due by **2300 (11:00 PM)** on **21 March** and is worth **30%** of your final grade. See each assignment for its specifications.

The second essay will require you to complete an essay **proposal**, which is due by **2300 (11:00 PM)** on **28 February** and is worth **10%** of your final grade. At this time, you must indicate whether you wish to revise your first essay according to the specifications of the second essay or write a whole new paper. Each option has its benefits and drawbacks; see the assignment for more details.

Final Exam (30%)

Date: Sat, Apr 13, 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM, TBA

You will write one final examination that is **cumulative** to the **beginning of the course**. Expect mostly multiple choice and longform questions, but no essays.

6.2 Bonuses and Extras

Factfinding Bonus. You will receive a 1.5% bonus to your final grade for putting in the hard work of reading through the Course Outline and/or the Assignment Specifications and/or the Style Guide (as relevant) to find the answers to your questions. This will operate on the honour system, and the only way you can lose this bonus is to prove to me that you have not read them. You can prove this to me by asking me a question that is explicitly answered in a relevant document.

Altruism Bonus. Everyone will collectively receive a 1% bonus to their final grades as a reward for someone volunteering to be a note-taker for SAS. Everyone loses this bonus if I am still being contacted by SAS about a volunteer note-taker by week 03.

The Mercy Token. Each student will receive one virtual “mercy token” which can be exchanged for a 48-hour extension on any assessment other than the final exam—no questions asked. Any assignment that is late by six hours or more will automatically use up your Mercy Token and grant you a 48-hour extension. As a bonus, in the last lecture, I will share one multiple choice final exam question for every eight unused tokens held across the course by that time.

7 Course Statements

7.1 Assessments: How to submit your work

All written work must be submitted through the dropbox function of CourseLink. No paper copies are required or desired.

You may not submit any work via email, at any time, for any reason.

7.2 Assessment: Electronic submissions

All electronic submissions must be in one of the following file formats: Microsoft Office (docx, doc) [preferred]; Portable Document Format (pdf); Rich Text Format (rtf).

Under no circumstances are you to submit work in the following formats: Google Docs (gdoc); Apple Pages (pages); LibreOffice (ott, odt). CourseLink and Turnitin are unable to

process these file types.

Any submission that is unable to be processed by CourseLink or Turnitin will not be accepted. This includes corrupted or empty files.

7.3 Assessments: Late penalties

Assignments that are late by **less than six hours** (as indicated by the latest date stamp on dropbox) will incur a non-negotiable **5%** penalty. You will know if you are incurring this penalty because dropbox will indicate that your paper is late. Assignments that are late by **six hours or more** are **no longer accepted**; that is, you will receive a **zero** on that assignment.

7.4 Assessments: Extensions

First extension. The first extension will use up your Mercy Token and grant you a 48-hour extension. This will happen automatically on the first assignment that is late by six hours or more.

Longer and/or subsequent extensions. Subsequent extensions, or any request for an extension longer than 48 hours, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will generally only be given on medical, humanitarian, or compassionate grounds. I reserve the right to require documentation for these requests.

7.5 Assessments: How to format your work

All formatting requirements can be found in the course Style Guide. It is your responsibility to know and follow these requirements. Note that everything must follow **Chicago Style (Notes & Bibliography)** for citations.

7.6 Assessments: Turnitin

This university has adopted Turnitin to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the university.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

A note about Originality Scores. When you submit your work to Turnitin, Turnitin will generate an "Originality Score" for your assignment. The Originality Score merely represents the percentage of your paper (by word count) that can be found in other papers in their database. It **does not** indicate how much of your paper is plagiarized. In fact, it makes no judgement about plagiarism at all. There are **no penalties** associated with having an Originality Score of any value. It is up to me to interpret the Originality Score and decide whether any academic misconduct has occurred.

7.7 Engagement: Where to find course-related information

I will use CourseLink extensively. There you will find news items, errata, grades, minor announcements, assignments, the dropbox, and so on. It is your responsibility to check it regularly. If you have a question, you should check there first.

Moderately and highly important announcements will be made in lecture and/or via email. You are responsible for knowing what is going on in the course; the best way to do that is to go to all lectures, and keep an eye on your email inbox.

7.8 Engagement: Accessing course material

You must get ten out of fifteen questions correct on the Week 01 Introductory Quiz in order to access any of the course material (i.e. lectures, assessments, and so on) from week 02 onwards. This quiz tests on the material from the Course Outline and from the Week 01 Introductory Lecture video. You have unlimited attempts, and there is no penalty for failure other than simply continuing not to have access to the course material. You can find the quiz by navigating to the following page: Course Content > Lectures > Week 01. It is called "Week 01 Introductory Quiz".

You will not get any academic consideration for failing to get access to the course material; that is, it is no different if you miss a deadline because you did not have access to the assignment before the due date than it would be if you had access to the assignment ahead of time and still did not submit one.

7.9 Engagement: Where to find readings, assignments, and lectures

All non-textbook readings are on electronic reserve through the library.

All assignments will be posted in PDF on CourseLink.

All lectures will be posted as non-printable PDFs on CourseLink, usually within forty-eight hours. **Please do not bug me about this. They will be up when they are up.**

7.10 Engagement: In-lecture technology policies

Laptops are allowed in lecture just as long as they are being used for course-related purposes. I reserve the right to take whatever measures necessary to mitigate any problems they cause.

Smartphones have no place in the classroom. Refrain from using them. If it is difficult for you to go through the entire class without interacting with your phone, you should seek help. I reserve the right to remove repeat offenders from the lecture.

You may **not** record lectures.

7.11 Engagement: How to contact me

I will hold weekly **office hours**, except for week seven or when announced in advance. This is the best time to get personalized, detailed answers to whatever questions you may have. Office hours will be posted in this Course Outline and on the CourseLink homepage for this course.

Outside of office hours, **email** is the official mode of communication. You should always use your Guelph email address for any communication for this course.

I do not answer any emails marked high priority, high importance, or have the words "URGENT" or "IMPORTANT" in the title. They are deleted without being opened.

A note about response times. I try to respond to emails within a few hours of receiving them. This does not mean that I will always be able to respond so quickly. Only send a follow-up--and, in fact, please do send a follow-up--if I have not responded at all within twenty-four hours.

7.12 Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

8 University Statements

8.1 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.

8.2 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 grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.3 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 course registration are available in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg->

regchg.shtml

8.4 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.

8.5 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 can be found on the SAS website
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

8.6 Academic Integrity

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 encourages academic integrity. 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.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.7 Recording of Materials

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

8.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>
