



PHIL*3160 Metaphysics

Winter 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 04, 2019

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

A common way of thinking of the world is that it consists of objects with properties that persist through time while changing in different ways. Yet there are deep puzzles about each of these basic, seemingly indispensable concepts. What does it take to be an object? How much can an object change without becoming a different object? Are some of an object's properties essential to it? Metaphysics is the business of proposing and debating answers to these questions and related questions. This course introduces students to these debates.

Pre-Requisite(s): 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits

1.2 Course Description

This course focuses on metaphysics, which is the area of philosophy concerned with the nature of reality. It will take up the basic and central issues of metaphysics called 'ontology': What things exist? One of the central debates in metaphysics is between metaphysical realists, who believe that reality contains universals, and nominalists, who deny this: they believe that there are only concrete particulars. This will be our point of departure. We will investigate what these camps say about reality: What are objects? Are there any necessary truths? What is causation?

1.3 Timetable

On Courselink you will find a Schedule of Readings and Assignments. Please refer to this for all information about due dates.

1.4 Final Exam

This course has a take-home exam, which will be released at the end of the final class (April 3). It is due on April 12 by 5:00pm. The exam must be submitted to the "Final Exam" Dropbox on Courselink.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor:	John Hacker-Wright
Email:	jhackerw@uoguelph.ca
Telephone:	+1-519-824-4120 x56765
Office:	MCKN 330
Office Hours:	11:00-12:00 Mondays

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resource(s)

Michael Loux and Thomas Crisp, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*, 4th edition (Textbook)

This book is available at the bookstore and on-reserve at the library. Access to the book will be crucial for doing well on the quizzes and exams.

4 Learning Outcomes

We will aim to achieve the following goals in this course, which fit within a framework for the Bachelor of Arts approved by the University of Guelph Senate.

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. ...identify, comprehend, and evaluate arguments in metaphysics (literacy).
 2. ...better understand and articulate your own metaphysical commitments (professional and ethical behavior).
 3. ... arrive at your own reasoned evaluation of the views that we will be discussing (creative and critical thinking).
 4. ...communicate your philosophical views on these issues to others clearly and concisely (communication).
 5. ...thoroughly understand key issues in metaphysics (depth and breadth of understanding).
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Please see Schedule of Readings and Assignments on Courselink for a day-by-day schedule of topics that will be discussed in class.

6 Assessments

Your grade for the course will be based on four essay quizzes that will consist in approximately 1.5-2 pages of writing, a take-home mid-term that will consist in 4-6 pages of writing, and a take home final that will consist in 6-8 pages of writing. These will be evaluated on the basis of demonstrated mastery of the course content as well as demonstrated ability to critically assess the views presented in the readings. You will not be able to succeed in the course without reading the texts carefully. Lectures and discussions will highlight what the instructor takes to be important points and potential misunderstandings, but they are no substitute for reading the texts carefully.

Please refer to the Schedule of Readings and Assignments on Courselink for helpful guiding questions. They will be the basis for the questions I will pose on the quizzes and exams.

6.1 Assessment Details

Quiz 1 (10%)

Due: Courselink

This quiz will cover the Introduction to Loux and Crisp as well as "The Nature of Metaphysics" by Van Inwagen, available through Courselink. You will have to write between 1.5 - 2 pages to answer the question completely. It must be completed on Courselink by January 18 at 5:00.

Quiz 2 (10%)

Date: Courselink

This quiz will cover Chapter 1 of Loux and Crisp as well as Russell's "The World of Universals" available through Courselink. Same format as Quiz 1. It must be completed on Courselink by 5:00pm on February 1.

Quiz 3 (10%)

Date: Courselink

This quiz will cover Chapter 2 from Loux and Crisp as well as "The Elements of Being" by D.C. Williams. Same format as previous quizzes. It must be completed on Courselink by 5:00pm on February 15.

Quiz 4 (10%)

Date: Courselink

This quiz will cover Chapter 5 of Loux and Crisp as well as "Actualism and Possible Worlds" by Alvin Plantinga, available on Courselink. Same format as previous quizzes. It must be completed on Courselink by 5:00pm on March 18.

Midterm (30%)

Date: Courselink

This is a take-home mid-term exam that will ask more probing questions about the material covered prior to the release of the exam, on March 6. It will cover the Introduction through Chapter 2 of Loux and Crisp, as well as the readings from Van Inwagen, Russell, and Williams. To perform well on the exam, you will need not only to be able to describe the

views you've learned accurately, but also be able to evaluate the arguments made in the text and present your own views with reasoned support.

Final Exam (30%)

Date: Courselink

This will be a comprehensive take-home final exam. There will be more material from the period after the final exam, but everything covered in the course could be asked about on the exam. It will be released on April 3 and due by April 12 at 5:00pm.

7 Course Statements

7.1 Late Policy

All assignments should be submitted to me through the Courselink dropbox. Please submit a file in Word or Rich Text Format (no .pdf or .pages files please).

All late assignments will be assessed a 10% penalty for every 24 hours late, except in cases of illness or family emergency.

7.2 Classroom Comportment

Out of consideration for your fellow students, please observe the following:

1. No cellphone use, including text messaging.
2. No use of laptops.
3. No personal conversations.

I reserve the right to remove students from the classroom for distracting or disrespectful conduct.

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>
