



# PHIL\*2370 Metaphysics and Mind

Winter 2020

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - January 06, 2020

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## 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-Requisites:** 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL\*1000, PHIL\*1010, PHIL\*1030, PHIL\*1050)

### 1.2 Course Description

An exploration of major works in five traditions:

- Aristotle: *Metaphysics* (the ontology of substance),
- Plotinus: *Enneads* (emanationism),
- Spinoza: *Ethics* (monism),
- Hegel: *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (dialectical idealism),
- Heidegger: *Introduction to Metaphysics* (phenomenological metaphysics).

### 1.3 Timetable

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

### 1.4 Final Exam

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

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

<b>Instructor:</b>	Kenneth Dorter
<b>Email:</b>	kdorter@uoguelph.ca
<b>Telephone:</b>	+1-519-824-4120 x53218
<b>Office:</b>	MCKN 353
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays 11-12 and 12-1 or by appointment

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resources

#### **Aristotle (Textbook)**

*The Philosophy of Aristotle* (ed. Bambrough) Signet ISBN 978-0-451-53175-9

#### **Spinoza (Textbook)**

*Ethics* (trans. Curley) Penguin ISBN 9780140435719

#### **Plotinus (Textbook)**

*The Essential Plotinus* (trans. O'Brien) Hackett ISBN 0915144093

#### **Hegel (Textbook)**

*Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, (trans. Rauch) Hackett ISBN 0872200566

#### **Heidegger (Textbook)**

*Introduction to Metaphysics* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (trans. Fried), Yale ISBN 9780300186123

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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 issues and approaches to metaphysics and

philosophy of mind.

2. Read and comprehend original source materials in the metaphysics and philosophy of mind.
  3. Write clearly and cogently on basic problems in metaphysics and philosophy of mind.
  4. Be familiar with the philosophies of Aristotle, Plotinus, Spinoza, Hegel, and Heidegger.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Dates will depend on class discussion. I'll let you know by email when we move on to the next reading.

### 5.1 Lecture

#### Topics:

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE (ED. BAMBROUGH)

1. *Metaphysics* I.1,2, *Physics* II.3;
2. *Metaphysics* VII.3,7,8;
3. *Metaphysics* XII 6,7,9,10.
4. *Psychology* III.4,5; *Ethics* X.1,4-8.

#### Topics:

SPINOZA, ETHICS (TRANS. CURLEY)

1. Book 1 to Proposition 20;
2. Proposition 21 to end of Book 1;
3. Book 2 to Proposition 23;
4. Proposition 24 to end of Book 2;

**5. Book 5.**

**Topics:**

THE ESSENTIAL PLOTINUS (TRANS. O'BRIEN):

- 1. Beauty 34-43;**
- 2. Descent of the Soul 62-70;**
- 3. Three Primal Hypostases 91-104, and the Post Primals 106-108,**
- 4. The Good or One 73-88.**

**Topics:**

HEGEL, INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY,  
(TRANS. RAUCH) (TEXTBOOK)

- 1. Chapters 1 & 2;**
- 2. Chapter 3;**
- 3. Chapter 4.**

**Topics:**

HEIDEGGER, INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS (TRANS.  
FRIED) (TEXTBOOK)

- 1. pp. 15 & 16, 102-127;**
  - 2. 128-163;**
  - 3. 163-188;**
  - 4. 188-203, 218-220.**
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## 6 Assessments

### 6.1 Assessment Details

#### Final Exam (50%)

The final exam will be Mon 02:30PM - 04:30PM (2020/04/13).

#### Essays (50%)

You may write either two 1250 word essays (25% each) or one 2500 word essay (50%). 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths – essays may be longer if justified by the content. You can also use the first 1250 word essay as a trial run for the 2500 word essay, or you can expunge the grade for your first essay by submitting a 2500 word essay later. If you want preliminary feedback submit something by the first deadline. All essays must be submitted to the Turnitin dropbox on Courselink. See Essay Guidelines for due dates.

**Below are suggested essay topics. If you're interested in a different topic check with me before you write the essay. Note that the 50% weighting applies to the full length (2500 word) essays.**

#### 1. Personal identity (50%)

Are we the same person that we were when we were born and the same person that we'll be at the end of our lives? **a)** If so, what is it that remains the same, since our body and our consciousness and even our memories are constantly changing? **b)** If we're not the same person, why do we think we are and why should we make an effort at anything if the person who receives the benefit is different from the person who makes the effort? Perhaps our DNA remains the same, but identical twins and clones share the same DNA and yet are distinct individuals.

#### 2. God and creation. (50%)

Was the world created by God? **a)** If so, since God is good and all-powerful why is there evil, both in human beings and nature (disease, earthquakes, famines, etc.). **b)** If not, why is science possible? Science is successful only because the world is rational, and if the world is rational it seems to be the product of a rational creator rather than random chance.

#### 3. Free will. (50%)

Do we have free will? **a)** If so, why does it make sense to ask why someone acts as they do? "Why" implies a reason or cause, in which case our will is determined rather than free.

**b)** If not, why do we feel that if we could return to the same moment we could make a different choice, and how can we hold people responsible for their choices unless they were free?

**NOTE:** If you choose this question you ought to be aware of my TEDx talk on the subject (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VBihVb3hlw>) although you don't have to agree with it.

#### 4. Universals. (50%)

A universal is what a number of individuals have in common, thus all our nouns are universals. But do universals exist outside of language? Do they refer to something real or are they only convenient simplifications. **a)** If they refer to something real what is it? No two individuals are identical so how can universals be true common denominators rather than convenient ways of talking which collapse real differences? **b)** If universals don't refer to real commonalities among things, how is it possible for science to study individual cases and successfully generalize the observations to entire species and classes of phenomena?

#### 5. Textual exegesis (50%)

I've made three major (but accessible) texts on metaphysics available as possible essay topics. If you write on a book instead of a problem be sure to read the whole book:

- Lucretius: *On the Nature of Things* (CourseLink)
- Fichte: *The Vocation of Man* (CourseLink)
- Russell: *The Problems of Philosophy* (CourseLink)

## 6.2 ESSAY GUIDELINES

Note: All essays must be submitted to the appropriate Turnitin dropbox on Courselink.

### 1. Deadlines:

2500 word essay: March 16

1250 word essays: February 24 and March 16.

For the first deadline late essays will be accepted until the end of the week without penalty; after that you'll have to defer to the single essay option. For the second deadline late essays will be penalized one mark (out of 100) per day. No essay will be accepted after 9 a.m. the day before the final exam. Students will not normally be required to answer questions about their essay but may in some cases. I'll email you if any questions arise so check your email daily since I won't be able to grade it if I can't reach you.

**2. Subject:** Any of the problems or any of the texts listed under "Assessments" above. If you wish to choose a different topic get it approved by me first.

**3. Sources:** If you write an exegetical essay focus on primary texts (texts of the original author), although secondary sources (works about the original author's texts) may be used as a supplement. Quotations in a secondary source don't count as primary texts because they're taken out of context. The point is to develop skill in exegesis and evaluation; reporting the results of other people's exegesis and evaluation doesn't accomplish this.

**4. Content:** If it's an exegetical essay combine scholarship and creativity, i.e. both attentiveness to the text and a personal response of your own. Whether it's an exegetical or problem essay consider possible objections to your own views. The more challenging you can make these issues, the better: treating answers as obvious is not worth as much as seeing how they are controversial and difficult.

**5. Format:** The five paragraph model you learned in high school was training wheels to teach discipline. People don't really write essays like that. Just organize your ideas to be as clear as possible. Use double spaced full sized font (12 point). Also use page numbers. 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths – essays may be longer if justified by the content.

**6. Style:** Use "I" rather than awkward and outdated circumlocutions like "the author." And use inclusive language like "humankind" instead of "mankind", "people ... they" instead of "a person ... he." Other possibilities: "he or she", "she or he", "s/he", etc.

**7. References:** Give references to all information and ideas taken from someone else, even if they aren't direct quotations. Otherwise it may be plagiarism (when in doubt ask). Listing your sources in a bibliography isn't enough since it doesn't show where you make use of them or which page the reference comes from. References should list the author that you're citing first. For example, if you use a book called John Green (editor), *The Philosophy of Lucretius*, and your footnote is to something Lucretius wrote, it should say, "Lucretius, in John Green

(editor), *The Philosophy of Lucretius*, p. 12", NOT "Green, John, *The Philosophy of Lucretius*, p. 12". Only if you cite something that the editor wrote would you use the latter format. Only the first citation need be complete; after that you can abbreviate, e.g. "Green 12".

**Sample philosophy essays are available on Courselink.**

## 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 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>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

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

### 7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic 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

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

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

## 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.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website

<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 7.6 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>

## **7.7 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.

## **7.8 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>

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