



PHIL*2370 Metaphysics and Mind

Winter 2021

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 05, 2021

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

This course introduces you to topics in *contemporary philosophy of mind*. As always in philosophy though, the contemporary discussion is informed by contributions from the past. So we will start with works from the seventeenth century: *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) by René Descartes and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) by John Locke. After that, we will follow the development of the subject to its contemporary state: one in which the doctrine of *functionalism*—of which neither Descartes nor Locke had an inkling—is center stage (and under lively attack).

Part of the point of this course is to help students to read what are called “primary texts”: those texts in which ideas were *originally presented*. (The contrast is with presentations of these ideas in textbooks or summaries written by others much later.) Reading primary texts is challenging, especially the ones from the last century, since they were aimed not (as the 17th century texts were) at a wide educated public, but at a readership of academically trained philosophers. But it is rewarding: one often discovers neglected yet interesting wrinkles, reflection on which can open up unexplored avenues.

1.3 Timetable

Work

Because we will be reading primary texts, the number of pages of reading that we will do is not great: about 15 pages per week. But you will be *writing something each week* in response to this reading. You will find that in order to do well at this, you will have to spend several hours each week tossing around interpretations of what the author means, and considering possible responses to their arguments. That *engagement* is where the work is, not in your passively taking in the authors' ideas. Nevertheless you will be tested each week on your basic comprehension of the readings.

There is no final exam in this course.

Each week:

- take a quiz on the reading (in the Tuesday class time)
- write and submit by 6 pm Friday (on Teams) either:
 - an *explicitation* (< 150 words), or,
 - an *explicitation and discussion* (< 400 words)
 of one of the arguments in the text (selected by me).

Readings

This is all the readings. (We won't be reading all of Book 2 of the Locke though, just selections.)

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641)
 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book 1 (1690)
 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book 2 (1690)
 Carl Hempel, "The logical analysis of psychology" (1935)
 J. J. C. Smart, "Sensations and brain processes" (1959)
 Hilary Putnam, "Psychological predicates" (1967)
 Jerry Fodor, "The mind-body problem" (1981)
 John Searle, "Minds, brains, and programs" (1980)
 Margaret Boden, "Escaping from the Chinese Room" (1988)
 Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?" (1974)
 Janet Levin, "Could love be like a heatwave?" (1986)
 Gilbert Harman, "The intrinsic quality of experience" (1990)

1.4 Final Exam

There will be no final exam in this course.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor: Mark McCullagh
Email: mmcculla@uoguelph.ca
Telephone: +1-519-824-4120 x53505
Office: MCKN 347

2.2 Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistant: Molly Graham
Email: mgraha14@uoguelph.ca

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Course website (Website)

<https://www.markmccullagh.ca/PHIL2370-01W21/>

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. In this course students will develop the abilities to:

- Prepare a 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.
 - Understand, explain and assess major theories in the history of political and moral thought.
 - Argue successfully for one's 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

Topics:

Our scheduled meeting times will be open discussions on Teams, except that the first 15 minutes of the Tuesday meeting will be for the weekly quiz (which will be done online).

6 Assessments

6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions

Details TBA but students will be graded on:

- quizzes
 - explicitations
 - explicitations + discussions
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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>

7.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

7.10 Illness

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.
