



UNSW
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
SYDNEY • AUSTRALIA

ARTS1361 Philosophy, Knowledge, Reality

Session 2 2013

Course Outline



Convenor: Michaelis Michael

Lecturers: M.Michael and Markos Valaris

Philosophy@UNSW

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES

ARTS1361 *Philosophy, Knowledge, Reality*

Session 2, 2013

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ARTS1361 Philosophy, Knowledge & Reality

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COURSE INFORMATION

This is a one-session course in Philosophy carrying six units of credit. There are normally two lectures and one tutorial each week.

Lectures begin in Week 1. Tutorials begin in Week 2.

Lectures: Monday 13:00 John Clancy Auditorium

Wednesday 09:00 Mathews Theatre A

There are normally *two lectures* each week starting in Week 1
You must also attend *one tutorial* each week starting in Week 2

The course is an introduction both to some enduring, and to some contemporary, philosophical questions, puzzles, and ideas about knowledge and reality.

Epistemology is the philosophy of *knowledge*.
Metaphysics is the philosophy of *reality*.

Philosophers to be read include Plato, Descartes and Russell, along with many contemporary philosophers. Topics to be discussed are as follows:

- (1) **Metaphysics:** personal identity, free will, god and evil, foreknowledge and fatalism, universals and essences, meaning of life, time-travel, appearance and reality.
- (2) **Epistemology:** truth, evidence, knowledge, empiricism and idealism, rationalism, scepticism, knowledge of other minds, knowledge of the external world.

By the end of the course you will have encountered many of the central concepts, problems and arguments in the above topic areas. You will

have had experience in formulating, analysing, and responding critically to these central philosophical ideas.

Difficulties

In case of any difficulties with study due to disability or other factors impacting on your ability to successfully complete work or concentrate on your studies, do contact the course co-ordinator. There are also counsellors available in the Student Centre you are able to see free of charge, if you are an enrolled student.

Course Co-ordinator

Dr Michaelis Michael

Room 325, Morven Brown Building
Ph 9385 2183

email: m.michael@unsw.edu.au

Consultation time :

Tuesday 12noon – 1pm

Lecturers
and

Dr Michaelis Michael as above

Dr Markos Valaris

Room 339

Ph 9385 2760

email: m.valaris@unsw.edu.au

Consultation time :

Tuesday 12 noon – 1pm

Textbook

Metaphysics: the big questions, 2nd edition, edited by Peter van Inwagen and Dean W. Zimmerman, Blackwell Publishers, 2008.

In the lecture outline this is called 'M'

Reading

You are expected to do the assigned reading in preparation for the lectures and for the tutorials. Each week's tutorial will discuss issues and questions raised in the reading, and in the lecture(s), for the previous week.

Assessment

Assessment for the course has three components. There is a short assignment, an essay and two online quizzes.

Written assessments are to be handed in at the drop boxes outside School of Humanities Office, (Morven Brown Building, Room 348). A School of Humanities cover sheet must be attached to the essay.

The penalty system for late written assignments is non-negotiable. The only exception is if an extension has been requested, and given, *by the due date*. Extensions will not be given unless there is a verifiable case of genuine hardship. **Assessments which are submitted late will not be commented on.**

Dr. Michaelis Michael (in room 325, Morven Brown Building) is the person to whom you should speak if you are requesting an extension; please e-mail (m.michael@unsw.edu.au) or phone (9385 2183) for an appointment.

Here is some more detailed information on these components of the assessment.

- (1) The **short assignment** will be a short written piece no more than 700 words in length, due on **22nd August, by 4 p.m.** (the Thursday of Week 4). It will be worth 20% of the marks available for the course. Late assignments will incur a penalty of 3% per day, after the due date (including weekends).
- (2) The **essay** will be no more than 1500 words long. It will be due on **Friday 8th November**. It will be worth 40% of the available

marks. Late essays will incur a penalty of 3% per day, after the due date (including weekends).

- (3) There are two online assessments each worth 20%. These must be completed on Moodle within the short period made available. The dates for these are **Wednesday 18th September 9am to 10am** and **Wednesday 30th October 9am to 10am**.

Each element of the assessment is geared towards a particular goal:
The **short assignment** is focused on your ability to identify and analyse an argument in tightly focused manner.
The **longer essay** is aimed at your ability to develop your own arguments, critically engaging with a body of literature and showing your own ideas.
The **online assessment** is geared towards showing that you have paid attention to the lectures and readings as a whole and not just focussed on your essay topic.

Assignment Submission

- The cut off time for all assignment submissions in the School is **4pm** of the stated due date.
- 2 assignment copies must be submitted for every assessment task - 1 paper copy and 1 electronic copy.
- All hard/paper copy assessments should be posted into the Assignment Drop Boxes outside the front counter of the School of Humanities and Languages on level 2, Morven Brown Building by 4pm on the due date.
- A completed cover sheet must be securely attached to assignments. The School is not responsible for any missing pages from poorly bound or stapled assignments.
- In addition, a soft copy must be sent through **Moodle** on Turnitin by 4pm on the due date

Attendance

To successfully complete this subject you are required to attend minimum 80% of classes. If this requirement is not met you will fail the subject. The tutor will keep attendance records. If you miss a tutorial through illness or misadventure please present doctor's certificate to your tutor so that the missed tutorial won't count against you.

There are no tutorials in Weeks 6, 10 and 13.

Moodle Site

You will have access to the course Moodle site. There will be much useful material on this site, including pdf versions of the lecture slides, additional readings, etc.

Useful Online Resources

The Stanford Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Do not use Wikipedia as a resource; it is really not to be trusted any more than random remarks made by somebody you run into in a pub or coffee shop.

Remember the key with these resources is to use them with a grain of salt. We are interested in your thinking. We are interested in the way you present reasons for positions and analyse intelligently the positions others have given for their positions. Simply repeating what others have said, including what the lecturer has said, does not show that intelligent engagement with the material.

Lecture Schedule

Lecture	Date	Lecture topic		Reading “M” means in Metaphysics text book, “*” otherwise available
Week 1	29 th July	Introductory (philosophy in general)	MM	van Inwagen and Zimmerman “What is Metaphysics?” pp 1-12 in M
	31 st July	Existence	MM	Quine “On What There Is” M 2 ;
Week 2	5 th Aug	Properties, Essences & Possible Worlds	MM	Russell, Universals M4 ; Armstrong, “Universals as Attributes” M 5 Lewis, “Modal Realism at Work” M 52
	7 th Aug	The Metaphysics of Colour	MM	Galileo “Two Kinds of Properties”*
Week 3	12 th Aug	Knowledge and Skepticism	MV	Descartes: <i>First Meditation</i> http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html
	14 th Aug	The Cogito	MV	Descartes: <i>Second Meditation</i> http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html
Week 4	19 th Aug	Clear and Distinct Perceptions: Regaining the World	MV	Descartes: <i>Third Meditation</i> * http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html
	21 st Aug	Error and Evil	MV	Descartes: <i>Fourth Meditation</i> * http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html J. L Mackie: “Evil and Omnipotence” http://www.jstor.org/stable/2251467
Week 5	26 th Aug	Innate Ideas and the Ontological Argument	MV	Descartes: <i>Fifth Meditation</i> http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html W. Alston: “The Ontological Argument Revisited” (http://www.jstor.org/stable/2183480)
	28 th Aug	Conclusion: How to Avoid Skepticism	MV	Descartes: <i>Sixth Meditation</i> http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html Vogel: “Cartesian Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation” http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2026858.pdf
Week 6	2 nd Sept	Personal Identity	MV	Descartes: <i>Sixth Meditation</i> http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/de.html Perry: <i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality I</i> * Swinburne: “Personal Identity: the Dualist Theory” (Optional) M39
	4 th Sept	Personal Identity	MV	Perry: <i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality II</i> *
Week 7	9 th Sept	Personal Identity	MV	Perry: <i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality II</i> * Shoemaker: “Personal Identity: A Materialist Account” (Optional) M36
	11 th Sept	Personal Identity	MV	Perry: <i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality III</i> * Strawson “The Self”*
Week 8 No tutorials this week	16 th Sept	Personal Identity	MV	Dennett “The Origins of Selves” http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/origins.htm Velleman, “The Self as Narrator”*

	18 th Sept	No lecture		Online Assessment – Moodle Quiz
Week 9	23 rd Sept	Causation and Determinism	MM	Hume, “Constant Conjunction” M 30 Anscombe “Causation and Determination” M 34 Lewis “Causation” http://www.jstor.org/stable/2025310
	25 th Sept	Free will	MM	Holbach, “We Are Never Free” M 43 Hobart, “Free Will as Involving Determination” M44 Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person” M51
		Mid Semester Break		
Week 10 No tutorials this week	7 th October	Labor Day Public Holiday		No classes
	9 th October	Time Travel	MM	Lewis, “The Paradoxes of Time Travel” M 23
Week 11	14 th October	Truth	MM	Entry in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/
	16 th October	Bullshit and Lying	MM	Frankfurt, <i>On Bullshit</i> Princeton University Press, 2005 (not required reading, but you might enjoy it.) See the interview at http://press.princeton.edu/video/frankfurt/ And also this where Frankfurt discusses his views on Bullshit and public life http://www.markmolaro.com/2007/05/16/harry-frankfurt-on-bullshit-on-truth/
Week 12	21 st October	Relativism and Constructivism	MM	Blackburn <i>Inaugural lecture</i> “Relatively Speaking” http://www.butterfliesandwheels.com/articleprint.php?num=12
	23 rd October	The Meaning of Life	MM	Michael and Caldwell “Consolations of Optimism” Ramsey “Epilogue”*
Week 13 No tutorials This Week	30 th October			Online Assessment – Moodle Quiz

Inquiries

If you have inquiries about the reading, your assignments or the course in the first instance contact your tutor. The lecturers in this course are available for consultation during listed consultation times, and at other times by appointment (contact details above). Feel free to contact the subject co-ordinator Michaelis Michael (ph. 9385 2183, email: m.michael@unsw.edu.au) if you have an issue you wish to discuss.

If there is an issue relating to the course that you feel you need to discuss with someone other than the co-ordinator, please contact the Philosophy Programme Co-ordinator, Dr. Simon Lumsden ph. 9385 2318, email s.lumsden@unsw.edu.au

All requests for extension must be made to Michaelis Michael.

If you are contacting your tutor or the lecturer by E-mail please *provide your name and a telephone number* as well as your student number.

ESSAYS: INSTRUCTIONS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Read the questions closely.

Criteria for Essay Assessment

Your essays will be marked according to usual written assessment criteria such as comprehension of concepts, coherence of argument, and the presentation of the argument. Specific considerations include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Content: understanding of concepts referred to; ability to synthesize theoretical and applied problems; coherence of argument; grasp of key problems that arise in the issue addressed; ability to summarize and present the argument within the word limit, balance between summary and comment
- Style: Coherence of structure, clarity of ideas and expression, grammar, concision, and overall cohesion

Essay writing hints

The skills that are of central importance in philosophy include:

- the ability to read philosophical texts carefully and thoroughly,
- the ability to fairly reconstruct a philosopher's position and argument in regard to a particular issue (this is "exposition" and involves selecting and prioritizing points and hence interpretation on your part)
- the ability to express your own thoughts and reason and argue about the material that you are addressing (this is your argument or considered judgment).
- Remember that an essay is an attempt, on your part, to explain something to someone you should think of as an intelligent ignoramus. They know nothing about the topic and it is your job to explain something to them. You are not writing for your tutor or lecturer. Imagine you are writing for one of your intelligent but ignorant friends, or members of your family. Take time to think through what you need to explain to get to the stuff you want to get to. Don't use overly technical terms unless it is necessary, and then make sure you use it correctly and that you explain its use.

Your ability to provide exposition and argument are central criteria used in assessing your essays.

1. Your essay will address a problem or issue arising from the themes of the course. Say clearly what the problem or issue is in your introduction and indicate how you will address it. The rest of the essay should (a) **elaborate the problem or issue in detail with reference to the material selected from the course** and (b) **develop an argument about the problem or issue**. You are unlikely to resolve an issue conclusively, but your essay should demonstrate an understanding of the way the issue is handled in the material that you are discussing and work towards relevant conclusions.
2. Remember that the reader cannot read your thoughts unless you commit them to paper. So you need to include all necessary information for the reader to understand what you're discussing and to follow your argument. Imagine your reader to be 'intelligent but ignorant', that is, they may not know the

material that you are discussing, but will be intelligent enough to understand it from your essay. A good test is to get someone else to read over a draft, to check that it is clear, comprehensive and concise.

3. Make sure that you use double-spacing and leave a generous margin to allow for marker's comments. Check your spelling and grammar.

4. **It is essential to acknowledge your sources.** Use quotation marks for any wording that is not your own and if you paraphrase someone else's material (including material from lectures), acknowledge your source. Use whatever referencing system you are used to, but be consistent. The test to see if your referencing system is adequate is: Will a reader be able to find this passage directly using the information in your reference? If not, then the system is inadequate.

There are excellent resources available on the web to help with writing essays. One of the best is Jim Pryor's guide to writing philosophy essays: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Course aims

- Provide a broad introduction to some of the most central concepts and issues in metaphysics and epistemology, from both a classical and a contemporary perspective.
- Encourage in-depth analysis of individual philosophical problems, arguments, and positions, together with the development of an understanding of the wider philosophical context in which they arise.
- Provide an introductory level avenue to developing the skills and reasoning ability associated with the discipline of philosophy, as a precursor to advanced courses in the discipline
- Provide opportunities for developing the skills necessary for scholarly inquiry, including written and oral communication skills, information literacy and research skills, and critical and analytic skills

Student learning outcomes

Upon completing this course, you are expected to be able to:

- Formulate, analyse, and respond critically to the problems, arguments, and positions covered in the course.
- Display skills associated with scholarly inquiry in the discipline of philosophy, particularly information literacy and critical analysis skills
- Make progress toward developing the following graduate attributes:

Attributes of UNSW Graduates

1. The skills involved in scholarly enquiry
2. An in-depth engagement with the relevant disciplinary knowledge in its interdisciplinary context
3. The capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem-solving
4. The ability to engage in independent and reflective learning
5. Information literacy - the skills to appropriately locate, evaluate and use relevant information
6. The capacity for enterprise, initiative and creativity
7. An appreciation of, and respect for, diversity
8. A capacity to contribute to, and work within, the international community
9. The skills required for collaborative and multidisciplinary work
10. An appreciation of, and a responsiveness to, change
11. A respect for ethical practice and social responsibility
12. The skills of effective communication.

These attributes have been identified by UNSW as the characteristics it seeks to instil in its students. They include generic skills, such as information literacy and research skills, as well as more specialised skills for collaboration and effective communication. They also include more general and personal qualities, which are displayed in your relations with others and engagement with the wider world. There a number of ways in which this course contributes to graduate attributes.

First, the teaching strategies used encourage analytic and critical thinking skills, as well as the skills of effective communication. You are

encouraged to express and refine your own views of the topics discussed, and engage with the complexities of various approaches to philosophical problems.

Second, the content of the course encourages the development of a respect for diversity and intellectual fair-play, as you are required to engage deeply with viewpoints that you may strongly disagree with.

Third, the assessment package in the course is designed to allow you to develop analytic and critical thinking skills, research skills, and effective communication skills. It also allows you to enhance your ability to engage in creative problem solving and independent learning. To do this, the assessment takes a number of different forms, including oral and written work.

Students' rights and responsibilities

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences statement of students' rights and responsibilities should be read. It is to be found at the UNSW School of Humanities and Languages website.

<http://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au>

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Students seeking information on plagiarism should visit the following web site: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html>

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others.

Any OHS concerns should be raised with your immediate supervisor, the School's OHS representative, or the Head of School. The OHS guidelines are available at: http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/ohs_policies/index.html

STUDENT EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to, or at the commencement of the course. Alternatively, the Student Equity and Diversity Unit can be contacted on 9385 4734. Further information is available at:

<http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au>

GRIEVANCES

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should in the first instance attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors. If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and Languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html>

OTHER STUDENT INFORMATION

myUNSW is the single online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing & current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au>

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html>