School of Humanities and Languages

ARTS2360: Truth and Belief
Semester 1, 2015

Lectures: Thursdays 9–11 in MB G6 (weeks 1–12)
Tutorials: Thursdays 11–12 in MB G3, or Thursdays 1–2 in Mat 102 (weeks 2–13)
# 1. Course Staff and Contact Details

**Course convenor and lecturer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professor Stephen Hetherington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>MB 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>9385 2318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.hetherington@unsw.edu.au">s.hetherington@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Time</td>
<td>Thursdays 12–1 and by appointment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course tutor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dr. James Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>MB 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Contact by Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.t.hill@unsw.edu.au">j.t.hill@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# 2. Course Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Credit (UoC)</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>This is a course in metaphysics and epistemology. Traditionally, these are regarded as probably the two most central areas of philosophy. (The first half of the course will be on metaphysics; the second half will be on epistemology.) Philosophy will not have every answer to every question about the nature of reality. But there are some distinctively philosophical questions, to which there are distinctively philosophical answers. And one of the marks of their being philosophical is their being subject to a particular kind of questioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metaphysics</strong></td>
<td>is the philosophical study of reality. We will focus on such traditional metaphysical topics as these: what it is to be a person; what it is to have a free will (if indeed anyone ever does); whether there is, or even could be, a supremely good and knowing and powerful god, given the apparent suffering in the world; whether there is any meaning to human life; whether there is any harm in death as such; and what makes two different individual things able to be examples of one <strong>kind</strong> of thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>is the philosophical study of knowledge and conceptually related phenomena. We will focus on such traditional epistemological topics as these: what it is for a thought or claim to be true; what it is for a thought or claim to be rationally well supported; what it is for a thought or claim to be knowledge; what it is to have knowledge via the senses; what it is to have knowledge purely via reason; and whether it might actually be impossible for us ever to have any knowledge or rational support at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Aims</td>
<td>The philosophical aim is for students to gain an awareness of some historically and philosophically important ideas and ways of thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>An increased ability to engage critically and imaginatively with those ideas and those ways of thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Attributes</td>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Being capable of independent and collaborative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Being rigorous in analysis, critique, and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Being capable of effective communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Learning and Teaching Rationale**

I am required to allocate two hours each week to lectures. Even so, I will treat these as a chance to introduce you to what is usually called the Socratic method. (And the tutorials will also apply that method.) This means that the emphasis will not simply be on my presenting what I regard as the correct answers to the philosophical questions being discussed, for example. Each meeting will be conducted as a guided but shared inquiry. You can think of it as a seminar, in which I will lead the discussion. I will begin each meeting by presenting some of the main issues, claims, and concepts that are to be found in the reading for that week. I will then pose questions for discussion. These are intended to encourage you to reflect critically and imaginatively upon those issues, claims, and concepts. I will encourage you to follow through the implications and subtleties of their comments and suggestions. You will be encouraged to interact with your fellow students in those ways, too. What is sought is an atmosphere of inquiry — active learning.

This is sought because, for most students, it is a particularly effective way to gain — and to retain — a deeper sense of what philosophical thinking involves. Not coincidentally, it also reflects the way in which philosophy is actually conducted among professional philosophers. Philosophy is a discipline within which there is much critical debate. This can be a way of showing respect for someone’s ideas. It can also be about what might appear to be the simplest aspects of an issue. For it is all too easy to take for granted — as being quite clear and simple — much that is actually not so clear or simple. A great deal of philosophical discussion thus tries to clarify questions, before offering and assessing answers to them. In this class we will aim to become better at posing, and at answering, some fundamental epistemological questions. Skills of understanding, analysing, reasoning, and imagining will be called upon — and strengthened, hopefully.

I will not ‘spoon-feed’ you, such as by dictating lectures, or by distributing notes or posting web material, for you merely to absorb. This is a course in which you will have a marked opportunity to think — and to think for yourself. As I said, lectures will be interactive, in that I will give you plenty of opportunity to explore ideas as they arise — stopping me to gain clarity about what I have said, to question the truth of what I have said, etc. This opportunity to improve your ability to think well and philosophically will also place more responsibility upon you to do so. It will be up to you to pay attention, to be ready for potentially surprising changes of direction in discussion (always knowing that I will not allow these to divert us too far from the day’s main questions), and to note important points without my always having to say which are important points.

You are never required to agree with what you read for the course. But if you do disagree with it, you should think of good reasons for why, in your view, it is mistaken.

4. **Teaching Strategies**

See section 3 above.
### 5. Course Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Assessed</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes Assessed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>2500 words</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>14 April (Tues of Week 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>UNSW exam period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The essay will be on topics from meetings 1 through 5. The final exam will be on topics from meetings 6 through 12.

**Please Note:** The Arts and Social Sciences Protocols and Guidelines state the following:

A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

The Attendance Guidelines can be found in full at: [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/)

**Formal Examination**

This course has a formal examination which will be scheduled in the formal examination period from 12 – 29 June 2015. Students are expected to give their studies priority and this includes making themselves available for the entire examination period. Travel commitments made prior to the publication of the final examination timetable are not a valid reason for alternate assessment.

For information about examination dates, location and procedures at UNSW, visit [https://student.unsw.edu.au/exams](https://student.unsw.edu.au/exams)

**Grades**

All results are reviewed at the end of each semester and may be adjusted to ensure equitable marking across the School.

The proportion of marks lying in each grading range is determined not by any formula or quota system, but by the way that students respond to assessment tasks and by how well they meet the objectives of the course. Nevertheless, since higher grades imply performance that is well above average, the number of distinctions and high distinctions awarded in a typical course is relatively small. At the other extreme, on average 6.1% of students do not meet minimum standards and a little more (8.6%) in first year courses. For more information on the grading categories, see: [https://student.unsw.edu.au/grades](https://student.unsw.edu.au/grades)

**Submission of Assessment Tasks**

Assignments that are submitted to the School Assignment Box must have a properly completed School Assessment Coversheet, with the declaration signed and dated by hand. The Coversheet can be downloaded from [https://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/](https://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/). It is your responsibility to make a backup copy of the assignment prior to submission and to retain it.
Assignments must be submitted before 4:00 p.m. on the due date. Assignments received after this time will be marked as having been received late.

**Late Submission of Assignments**

The Arts and Social Sciences late submissions guidelines state the following:

- An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

- The late penalty is the **loss of 3%** of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof that the work is late. <Insertion: this course's essay will be marked out of 40, and so I will treat that figure of 3% as 1 point out of the 40 available>

- Work submitted **14 days after** the due date will be marked, and feedback will be provided; but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness, and if the work is a compulsory course component, a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but for which no mark is awarded.

- Work submitted **21 days after** the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course, a student will automatically fail the course.

The Late Submissions Guidelines can be found in full at: [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/)

The penalty may not apply where students are able to provide documentary evidence of illness or serious misadventure. Time pressure resulting from undertaking assignments for other courses does not constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness.

### 6. Extension of Time for Submission of Assessment Tasks

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines apply to all assessed tasks regardless of whether or not a grade is awarded, except the following:

1. any form of test/examination/assessed activity undertaken during regular class contact hours
2. any task specifically identified by the Course Authority (the academic in charge of the course) in the Course Outline or Learning Management System (LMS), for example, Moodle, as not available for extension requests.

A student who missed an assessment activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines state the following:

- A student seeking an extension should apply through the Faculty’s online extension tool available in LMS.

- A request for an extension should be submitted before the due time/date for the assessment task.

- The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.
The Course Authority can only approve an extension up to five days. A student requesting an extension greater than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.

The Course Authority advises their decision through the online extension tool.

If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.

7. Attendance

The Arts and Social Sciences Attendance Guidelines state the following:

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face or blended course and to complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
- If a student is unable to attend all classes for a course due to timetable clashes, the student must complete the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Permitted Timetable Clash form (see information at Item 8 below). A student unable to attend lectures in a course conducted by the School of Education can apply for “Permission to Participate in Lectures Online”.
- Where practical, a student’s attendance will be recorded. Individual course outlines/LMS will set out the conditions under which attendance will be measured.
- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.
- If a student experiences illness, misadventure, or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.
- Reserve members of the Australian Defence Force who require absences of more than two weeks due to full-time service may be provided an exemption. The student may also be permitted to discontinue enrolment without academic or financial penalty.
- If a Course Authority rejects a student’s request for absence from a class or activity the student must be advised in writing of the grounds for the rejection.
- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance.
- A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied that a student will still be able to meet the course’s learning outcomes and/or volume of learning.
- A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.
- The Dean will only grant such a request after consultation with the Course Authority to ensure that measures can be organised that will allow the student to meet the course’s learning outcomes and volume of learning.
• A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

• A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.

Students who falsify their attendance or falsify attendance on behalf of another student will be dealt with under the Student Misconduct Policy.

8. Class Clash

Students who are enrolled in an Arts and Social Sciences program (single or dual) and have an unavoidable timetable clash can apply for permissible timetable clash by completing an online application form. Students must meet the rules and conditions in order to apply for permissible clash. The rules and conditions can be accessed online in full at: https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/Permissible_Clash_Policy.pdf

For students who are enrolled in a non-Arts and Social Sciences program, they must seek advice from their home faculty on permissible clash approval.

9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s thoughts or work as your own. It can take many forms, from not having appropriate academic referencing to deliberate cheating.

In many cases plagiarism is the result of inexperience about academic conventions. The University has resources and information to assist you to avoid plagiarism.

The Learning Centre assists students with understanding academic integrity and how to not plagiarise. Information is available on their website: https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/. They also hold workshops and can help students one-on-one.

If plagiarism is found in your work when you are in first year, your lecturer will offer you assistance to improve your academic skills. They may ask you to look at some online resources, attend the Learning Centre, or sometimes resubmit your work with the problem fixed. However, more serious instances in first year, such as stealing another student’s work or paying someone to do your work, may be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Repeated plagiarism (even in first year), plagiarism after first year, or serious instances, may also be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures. The penalties under the procedures can include a reduction in marks, failing a course or for the most serious matters (like plagiarism in an Honours thesis) or even suspension from the university. The Student Misconduct Procedures are available here: http://www.qs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf
### 10. Course Schedule

**To view course timetable, please visit:** [http://www.timetable.unsw.edu.au/](http://www.timetable.unsw.edu.au/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture topic</th>
<th>Tutorial Content</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 March [week 1]</td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 1 &lt;see below for what 'RKP' denotes&gt; M&amp;E, chs. 23, 24, 25, 26 &lt;see below for what 'M&amp;E' denotes&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 March [week 2]</td>
<td>Free will</td>
<td>Persons; free will</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 2 M&amp;E, 29, 30, 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 March [week 3]</td>
<td>God and evil</td>
<td>God and evil</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 3 M&amp;E, ch. 22 On Moodle: Hume, <em>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</em>, part X; Rowe, 'The problem of evil and some varieties of atheism'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 April [week 5]</td>
<td>Death’s harm</td>
<td>Death’s harm</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 5 M&amp;E, chs. 33, 34, 35, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 April [week 6]</td>
<td>Properties</td>
<td>Properties</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 6 M&amp;E, chs. 13, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 April [week 7]</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 7 M&amp;E, chs. 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 April [week 8]</td>
<td>Well supported views</td>
<td>Well supported views</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 8 M&amp;E, chs. 38, 39, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 May [week 9]</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 9 M&amp;E, chs. 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May [week 10]</td>
<td>Observational knowledge</td>
<td>Observational knowledge</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 10 M&amp;E, chs. 45, 8, 47, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 May [week 11]</td>
<td>Pure reason</td>
<td>Pure reason</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 11 M&amp;E, chs. 52, 53, 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 May [week 12]</td>
<td>Sceptical doubts</td>
<td>Sceptical doubts</td>
<td>RKP, ch. 12 M&amp;E, chs 46, 48, 62, 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 June [week 13]</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>[revision]</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 11. Course Resources

**Textbook Details**

(2) *Metaphysics and Epistemology*, edited by Stephen Hetherington (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) [referred to in section 10 above as M&E]

**Additional Readings**

For weeks 3 and 4, some (but not all) of the readings will be on Moodle. (All of the other readings are in either RKP or M&E.)

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**12. Course Evaluation and Development**

Courses are periodically reviewed and students’ feedback is used to improve them. Feedback is gathered using various means including UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

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**13. Student Support**

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills. Find out more by visiting the Centre’s website at:

http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au

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**14. 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://student.unsw.edu.au/complaints

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**15. Other Information**

**myUNSW**

myUNSW is the online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing and 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

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**OHS**

UNSW’s Occupational Health and Safety Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For all matters relating to Occupational Health, Safety and environment, see

https://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/

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**Special Consideration**
In cases where illness or other circumstances produce repeated or sustained absence, students should apply for Special Consideration as soon as possible.

The application must be made via Online Services in myUNSW. Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration.

Applications on the grounds of illness must be filled in by a medical practitioner. Further information is available at: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

**Student Equity and Disabilities Unit**

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, or with the Student Equity Officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (9385 4734). Information for students with disabilities is available at: http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au/

Issues that can be discussed may include access to materials, signers or note-takers, the provision of services and additional examination and assessment arrangements. Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.